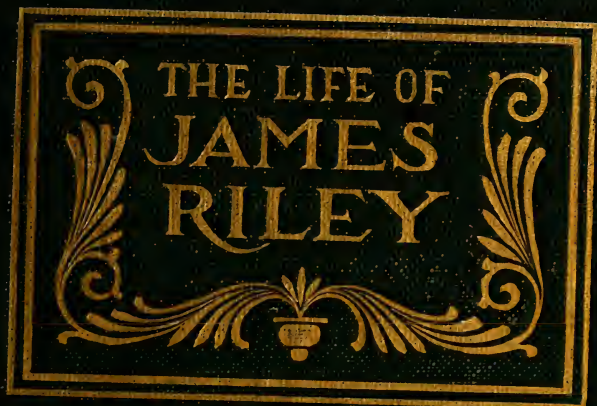


THE LIFE OF
JAMES
RILEY









JAMES RILEY

The Life of James Riley

COMMONLY CALLED

FARMER RILEY

*One of the World's Greatest
Psychics*



A complete and accurate account of the wonderful manifestations produced through his mediumship, at his home, and in different parts of the United States. And the Author's twenty-two years' experience in the investigation of psychic phenomena.



A. VLEREBOME,
AUTHOR

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INTRODUCTORY.

Knowing Mr. Riley to be an honest and a genuine materializing medium, while thousands have witnessed the phenomena at his home and in different parts of the country, all over the United States, I take pleasure in making known some of those manifestations. He is commonly known as "Farmer Riley."

In all the years that he has given this great truth to the people he has never made a charge for his services. Those who appreciated, usually donated. After all these years, Mr. Riley's condition financially is no better than when he received this beautiful phase.

In writing Mr. Riley's life, which will be interesting to the Spiritualist, as well as to the investigator, I have two objects in view; first, to benefit humanity, that it may learn more of this great truth; and second, to benefit Mr. Riley, since he has now arrived at an age where he should be permitted to live and enjoy the comforts of this life, for he has earned them, and the life of a medium is not all roses.

And in conclusion, permit me to say that all things contained in this book are actual facts. They really took place. And all who read this book, even the most skeptical, should be satisfied that the so-called dead do live. They never die.

THE AUTHOR.



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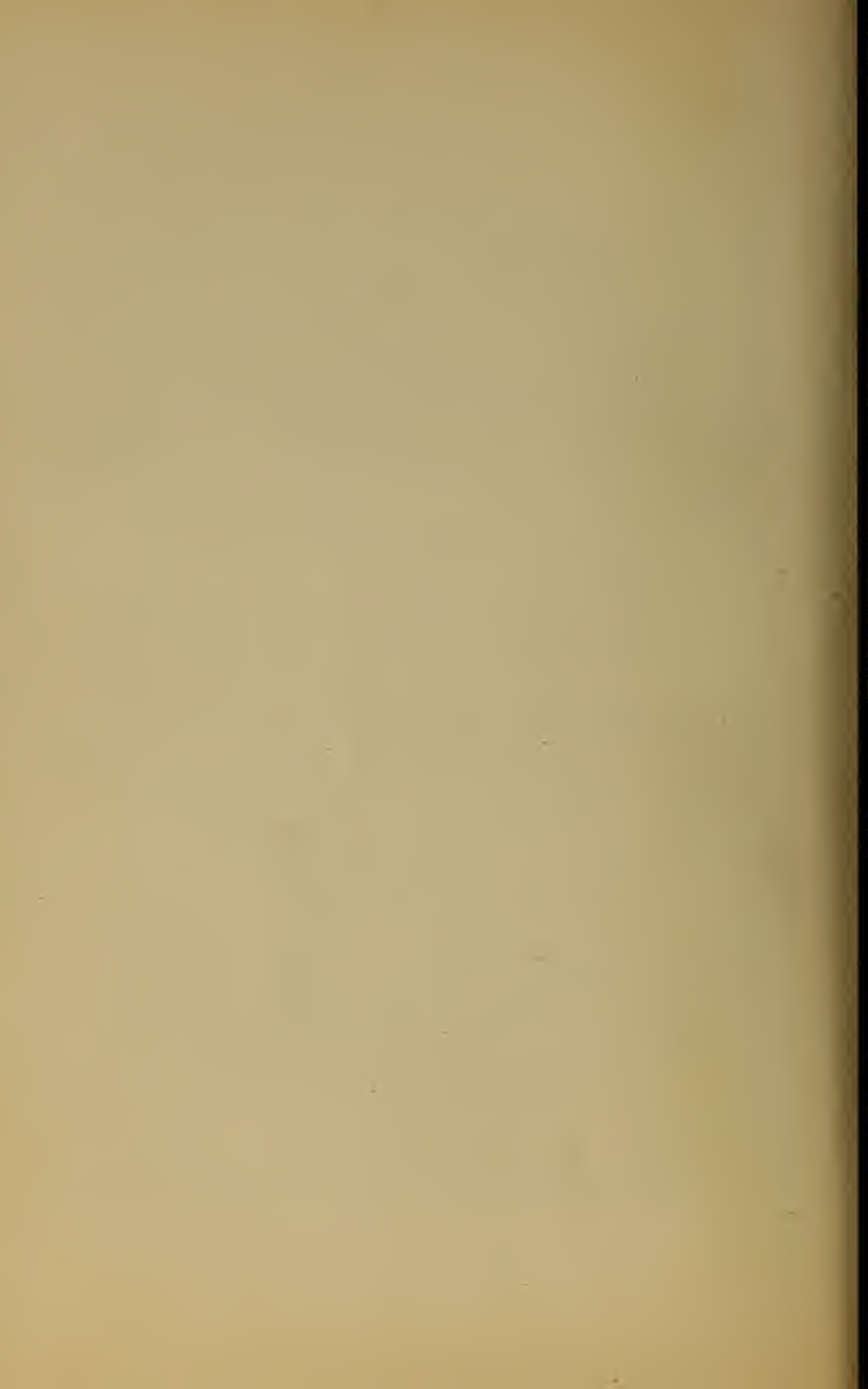
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CHAPTER I.

Beginning of Spirit Manifestation—The Camp—The Test—The Start.

James Riley, commonly known as "Farmer Riley", was born in Philadelphia, August 18th, 1843, and at this writing, August 7th, 1909, is almost sixty-six years old. His mother died early, leaving a family of three boys and two girls in care of the father, who held the place as foreman in a boiler works in the East. The business of the boiler works sent his father to California. He placed his children with a neighbor, agreeing to send a stipulated sum each month for their board, and signed the contract which called him to the coast for a period of two years. The neighbor, in the interim, moved with his belongings to Michigan, brought the Riley family, of whom Jim was the eldest, with him, and settled in Cass County.

When Riley, Sr., returned, he bought a piece of land in this same locality and built a house thereon, putting Jim's sister, then married, and her husband in charge of the place while he returned to California to complete his job. After two years' residence on the coast, he returned to the Michigan home to live, bought another piece of land, built a house, put his second daughter, unmarried, at the head of the board, with his three boys, Jim, George, and Charlie as efficient help, and there lived in comparative comfort for many years.

As the book deals chiefly with Jim and his work, we

will omit the further history of the family, pausing long enough to note that the several members are settled in comfort around the district, and are held in respect by their neighbors, as coming from strong and sturdy stock.

At the age of three years Jim seemed to have the gift of clairvoyance, and had for his playmates spirit children quite often. Between the ages of seven and eight, neighbors would come to his home and take him to their homes to witness table tipplings. Often three big men would sit on the table and try to hold it down, but they could not do so. These manifestations caused considerable excitement. People came flocking to his home, but his father would not permit him to produce the manifestations any more and put a stop to it.

When Jim was thirteen years old he left home to be independent, and from that day until the War broke out in 1861, he worked for farmers in the surrounding neighborhood, thereby becoming as well known as the oldest citizen. My object in being explicit about where he lived is to satisfy the reader of this book that he has been a resident in that part of Michigan all his life, was well-known, was honest, and would not perpetuate a fraud of any description.

When war broke out between the North and the South, Jim enlisted in the Forty-Second Illinois Infantry, serving three years and eleven months. He took part in the battles of Shiloh, siege of Corinth, Stone River, and Chickamauga. Was wounded in the arm at Chickamauga. He was also in those battles in the campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta under fire ninety days and ninety nights, the engagement at Peach Tree Creek, Jonesboro, Franklin, and Nashville. In June '65, Jim came home

and married Martha A. Nichols. Martha was living with her mother in the old township, and after her marriage continued to dwell in the neighborhood with her husband. Jim said he liked no place so well as the old county, and in '65 settled down for good. Several sons and daughters were born to them, of whom seven are yet living and married. His wife passed over April, 1903.

The home life of this couple was peaceful and happy. The problem of immortality, according to the orthodox belief, did not satisfy Jim. In the summer of '85, twenty years after his marriage, Jim, then a pronounced agnostic, visited the Spiritualist camp at Lake Cora, in Van Buren county. The principal speakers were A. B. French of Clyde, Ohio, and Mrs. Lake of California. French was a forceful speaker, and an orator, and his lecture made an impression on Jim. After the morning lectures at the camp and the afternoon speeches and tests, the tables were laid for dinner, and a party of friends was gathered about, with Jim at one end of the board. "When you see a real medium," said Jim, "point him out to me, because I want to take a good look at him. I've never seen one." "Here comes one," some one said, "It's Charlie Barnes and he is coming right this way!" Sure enough, Charlie Barnes, with his eyes closed, was moving down in the direction of the group at the end of the long table.

"That a medium?" said Jim, "That can't be a medium, surely! I thought from what I'd heard that they are something different to look at, not like you and me." Barnes kept coming on, and when he reached the group, he straightened up and saluted them like a soldier. Some

one of the party said, "It's for you Jim!" Jim said, "What's for me?" He had been suddenly "let down." He had his own ideas of what a medium was like, and here was "a little, insignificant, red-eyed chap!" "I can't ever forget how he looked, and how I felt when he came up to me"—is Jim's way of putting the matter. But his friends said, "It's a test for you; you should go up to him and take his hand."

So Jim arose and took Mr. Barnes by the hand, saying gruffly, "Who are you?" Mr. Barnes replied, in a subdued voice, "I'm Jeff Boyd." Jim said afterwards that he hadn't thought of Jeff Boyd for perhaps a year previous to that moment, had well-nigh forgotten that such a man had ever lived, most certainly had never spoken to any one in the camp, and doubted whether any one in the camp outside of his own friends knew he had ever been in the army. So Jim braced himself again and said, "If you're Jeff Boyd, where were you shot?" and Mr. Barnes, or Jeff Boyd replied, "At Franklin, Tennessee." "Correct." But Jim had one shot left, "I mean in what part of the body were you struck?" he asked. "Right here," the medium said, pointing to his forehead, right between the eyes. Then he proceeded to give other tests, such as pulling an imaginary pack of cards from his pocket and shuffling them; Jeff Boyd and Jim had often played cards together in the old camp days.

It took away Jim's appetite, and he got up from the table and wandered away by himself. He said he wanted to figure it out alone. Later in the day he drifted back again to the camp and listened to the public address. By and by one of the people, sitting next to him began to

jerk and quiver, and finally jumped up, gesticulating wildly. "What's the matter there?" asked Jim. "He's controlled," they told him. "Is that 'spirit control' that we hear so much about?" asked Jim. Just then the controlled one gave vent to a war whoop and began an uncouth dance on his own account. "Yes, he's controlled by an Indian," they told Jim. That settled it. "Of all the damn fool business," he said, and went home, disgusted; nor did he attend another camp meeting for many a day.

But the leaven was working. There was no getting around the communication from Jeff Boyd, and Jim determined that there was only one dead sure way by which he might know the truth for himself; and that was to sit for the phenomena himself at home, in company with his good wife. They were not Spiritualists; they were not bigoted one way or the other; they both wanted the facts and no more. Therefore, anything they received they could depend upon as genuine at least. So twenty years after their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. James Riley, in their little Michigan home, began to sit for spirit phenomena, willing to pay the price of a long apprenticeship of waiting, if, perchance, they might find the answer to the query "If a man die, shall he live again?"

CHAPTER II.

Early Recollections—A Spirit Playmate—The Mother Love—The Voice—The Materialized Form.

You will remember its being mentioned at the beginning of the last chapter that Jim Riley's mother died early. He was about six years old at the time. His earliest recollection, however, is of a somewhat peculiar incident which should be set down before we go further. Just this one scene painted on the canvas of his infantile mind, remains indelible. He remembers playing, during his mother's absence, with a little girl with light hair in ringlets, and a round face—a very beautiful child; very kind and considerate she seemed to be in her play with him. He puts this experience at about the time when he was not four years old, scarcely more than three years. His mother was in the habit of going out and leaving him alone. He remembers distinctly this one instance of playing with the child. When his mother returned this day he felt angry and abused because just as his mother entered the room, the little girl, his playmate, disappeared.

About a year after his mother's death, and before his father returned from California, the neighbor in whose charge Jim and his brother had been placed, moved, as has been said, to Michigan. Michigan was a wild enough

place in those days. There were no roads in that part of the country; just trails, blazed through the woods. After dark, the children being early put to bed, the neighbor in question and his wife used to hitch up the oxen and "go a'visitin'", leaving the house securely fastened, with three badly scared children abed.

Jim says that every night, while they lay there quaking, some one used to lie across the foot of the bed—they all slept in one bed—lie right across their legs and frighten them worse than ever. They often talked of this among themselves, and were mortally afraid of it; even told their foster parents, but they said it was all nonsense. This never being visible, it never was to be seen or felt when daylight came, but every night if they were left alone, this being would come and stay with them till they went to sleep. This shows that when the spirit forces find an instrument through which they can manifest in order to be able to show to people on earth, that they still live, they are frequently more anxious to communicate with those on earth than those on earth are to have them do so.

People say, "What good does Spiritualism do?" In a later chapter we will tell you. If those who make such a remark would take the trouble to investigate, they could answer their own question.

In after years, when Jim got into communication with intelligences without, his mother's spirit informed him that it was she, herself, who thus came to her lonely children, and when put the not unnatural query, "Why did you come when you knew it scared us worse than ever?" she replied that she could not help it. Her mother-love drew her and she had to come. Just about this

time, that is, before his father returned from California, Jim remembers his foster parents taking him sometimes to visit the neighbors, and he has the recollection of being frequently seated in a high-chair at a table, and of being told to put his hands on it. Then how or why, he knew not, the table would begin to move and twirl about, and no man in the room, though many tried, was strong enough to hold the table down and keep it still. This recollection is hazy in its details, but quite clear in its salient facts. There is a man by the name of John Little, yet living in this neighborhood, who was then a young man, and who just eleven years ago, 1899, met Jim and refreshed the latter's memory on some of the details, he, Little, having been present on more than one occasion when these manifestations were in progress. "Once," Little said, "the table was torn all to pieces." Jim has no recollection of this; however, he remembers that the table moved somehow, and he remembers also, that he was made to sit up there in a high-chair when he would have much preferred playing with the other children.

When Jim's father came back from California, however, there was no more of this. Riley, Sr., put a stop to all such things, as he called it all foolishness. He was a good parent, though a trifle stern, and he did not spare the correcting hand when Jim fell short of his ideal of a son. It was after a "seance" with his father in the woodshed, that Jim, hot in temper, and artificially warmed in person, resolved to run away from home and be independent henceforth of parental discipline.

We find then, in Jim's childhood and boyhood, instances of phenomena of two distinct varieties: the materialized forms of the playfellow, and his mother; and

the force, with or without intelligence, which moved the inanimate object, the table. There is yet to be added a third to these. All his life Riley has heard a voice in the daylight, as in the darkness, sometimes admonishing, sometimes encouraging, sometimes prophesying, but always speaking truth. Strange to say, he attached little importance to this monitor, so far as its having a spiritual existence goes, accepting it as something he could not account for, and perhaps unconsciously ascribing it to a manifestation of his own subconsciousness. Riley remarks that he has always felt as though it was somehow a part of himself, and he lets it go at that.

In its proper place we shall deal with the greatest of Riley's manifestations, his materializations; but because of the introduction of his golden-haired playmate at the opening of this chapter, we must make mention of a fact which is quite important to remember. As this child constituted the first of his spirit friends in his remembrance, so is she the only materialized form which he has ever beheld himself, and it came about in this way. After he had been practicing mediumship, and getting materialization for many years, he was sitting once at the table in his home, reading one evening. The lamp was lit, and he noticed that the cloth on the table—it was a very long cloth, reaching nearly to the floor—began to wave to and fro. He supposed that one of the children was under the table and said, "Be careful now, if you get up suddenly, you'll likely upset the lamp." His wife called to him from the next room to inquire to whom he was talking, and Jim replied, "There's one of the children here, hiding under the table." She said, "That can't be; they're all here with me." Just then the

table cloth was pulled aside, and lifted, and he saw the face of his little playmate,—size, hair, eyes, etc., just as she had been when he played with her as a child. He saw her, and then she was gone; nor has he ever found out who she was, or seen her again.

At the time he was, so far as he knows, in his ordinary normal condition, far removed from the trance state, being able to converse with his wife, and to reason about the danger to the lamp. Of all the materializations of which he has been the instrument, and to which he has been subject, this remains the only one of which he has been conscious, the only one which he could see with his own eyes, and speak to. From the time when his father returned from California, till the day when, twenty years after his marriage, Riley sat down with his wife to see what he could get for himself, he had received no manifestations of any psychic order save the voice; had heard of Spiritualism only as of something remote, vague and unreal, and had paid no attention to the voice (which still communicated with him) as having a psychic or spiritual importance. There were no visions, or rappings, or materialized forms for him for an unbroken period of nearly thirty-five years.

CHAPTER III.

Getting to Work—Home Sittings—Rules of the Game—Some Good Advice—The First Fact—Rappings—Slate Writing—John Benton.

We are now coming to the most interesting part of Jim's life. Jim and his wife resolved to see "what they could get" by sittings by themselves. After supper they sat down each at one end of an oval dining-table which had one leaf in it. It was a heavy piece of furniture, difficult to move at any time. Jim said, "Martha, if this table moves for you and me, we know it is not we who move it." To which Martha, being a woman of few words, responded by a nod. They sat facing each other, talking when the mood struck them, but mostly silent, night after night without missing a sitting, for six months. At the end of every night's seance, they wondered whether it was any use continuing, but as sure as the next night came it found them in their accustomed places, eager to begin again. Strange, was it not, that the force which had moved and broken the table for the boy of seven, would not appear at the desire of the man, grown? Strange, too, that the force was undesired by the boy and yet manifested; was earnestly desired by the man, yet failed to make itself known?

This should satisfy us that the human will or purpose has less to do with the manifestations, than a complais-

ance on the part of the force itself, a willingness or desire on the part of the force to manifest being apparently of more importance than a desire on the part of the sitters to witness manifestations. This is a point which investigators of phenomena seem to continually overlook or avoid. First, they grant to the control, or guiding spirit, intelligence. Having admitted intelligence, they seek to coerce; they do not say, "Come, if you can," or "Manifest, if you can," or "Bring us anything you can." They say, "Give us some evidence that you are what you claim to be," and when they do manifest, some will say, "Is that you, John?" Spirit will reply in the affirmative. The next question will be, "John, what do you want?" Nice reception he gets. That is not a reasonable attitude of mind. A medium is required for the manifestation of this force, whatever it may be, and whatever form it may take. That medium, or subject, is a human being. How then is it possible to dictate to those forces which govern one of our number, using him as an instrument through which they show their verity? Can the governed impose terms upon the governor? As long as we live our lives apart from the phenomena which we call occult or spiritual, we are asking no favor; but as soon as we enter the atmosphere of the unknown and seek to wrest from the invisible its secret and power, we become subject to the invisible.

We should, therefore, approach the investigation of spirit phenomena in the mental attitude of one who demands nothing as his right, because in that field we have no rights; it is not our field. If we enter the territory, we become subject to its laws. Many of us would greatly desire to invade it, sword in hand, as conquerors. There-

fore, let us put off our shoes and our pride when we seek to enter the presence of those mysteries which lie beyond the threshold of consciousness, because the ground is holy, and we have no business there, by right. If we learn anything, gather any new truths, find any solid comfort therein for our own uplifting, it is a special personal advantage, accorded to us by sufferance of the keepers of the mysteries. The door is opened because they are willing we should see, not because we have forced the lock by our own skill and prowess. We have no skill, and we have no prowess; we have no power, and we have no rights which can prevail against the forces invisible. Therefore, come we as suppliants—peace envoys, with humility and love, or let us stay away. Keep we to our own world, if we cannot observe the rights of citizens of another.

Think, for a moment, how blindly and brutishly men make demands upon the spirits of the departed. "Show us!" they say. "Tell us, give us, prove to us!" Always a demand, even when there is a despairing cry for recognition, a despairing love,—the same old imperious note, thinly disguised, vibrates continuously. It is always an endeavor to compel, a cry for personal satisfaction; a mother wants news of her babe, a husband asks for his wife. Why? For personal satisfaction—to still the anguish of the heart—to assuage the grief—to satisfy the love to satisfy; to appease mostly, no doubt, but self-centered, imperious, demanding. This is not the spirit of the one to whom light is given. To know of these matters for a certainty, one must give all, and ask nothing, and wait; thus, shall he know.

On the particular night when the table moved for Mr.

and Mrs. Riley, they had spent perhaps three hours over the sitting, sometimes talking together, sometimes silent, with their hands outstretched, palms downward, resting on the table, when Jim said, "I don't believe it's any use sitting longer tonight," an echo of the same remark he had made every night for months back; to which Mrs. Riley answered, "It's early yet; we might as well sit here as any where else." Not five minutes after, the table moved sideways about two feet; there was no mistake about it; the forces had come! Jim knew he had not pushed that table himself; he knew that his wife could not move it from where she sat, even if she had been so inclined, which in itself was absurd. So, after six months of waiting, they got their first fact.

Then they began to ask for more information. They said, "If this is a spirit moving this table, please move it to the left." The table obediently moved over to the left about ten inches. Then this table at which they had been sitting for six months, without being able to get the smallest perceptible movement from it, began to quiver and vibrate, and move a little back and forth like a fretting steed, impatient to be off. The movements, in reply to questions, became more free and instantaneous. The table began twisting about in such a manner that the two sitters had to get out of their chairs and move about the room with it. Then Mrs. Riley said, "If this is the spirit of Ezra, (her brother, killed in '64 in the siege of Atlanta) will the table move back to the right?" The table moved back and they decided that that would do for that evening, or morning—it was then 3 A. M.

That was an exciting time for Mr. Riley and his good wife. The next night Riley assisted in drying the dishes

after supper, so anxious was he to get to the tests. The forces were quickly in evidence; from this time on, indeed, the table moved almost as soon as they laid their hands upon it, but it would not move for Mr. Riley alone, nor for his wife alone. Now a new phase presented itself. The table, after moving about first to one side, then to another, showed a desire to rear up on two legs, and thus it came about that "raps" first came to Riley. Upon being asked to rap three times for "yes," and once for "no," the table promptly responded, and by running the alphabet from A to Z, the sitters were enabled to converse with the forces. The table would rest uplifted on two legs till the letter E was reached by the sitters in their catechism, when it would drop to all fours again; then it would tilt up till the next letter was reached, and so on through the whole word. When the word was finished, the table would remain on all fours. Thus the word "Ezra" was spelled out every evening. During these early seances Ezra, the spirit of Mrs. Riley's brother would announce himself by rapping out, "Dear sister, I come from the banks of the Chattahoochee river to greet you."

Meanwhile there was great commotion over these phenomena outside of the Riley household. People came in parties, after working hours, from the district round about. Neighbors tied their horses in the yard and gathered in the Riley kitchen to discuss and witness the phenomena, and the fame thereof spread throughout the country. Various and many were the theories put forward to account for the manifestations, none being quite so satisfactory as the simple and direct agency of returned spirits of the departed. Strange and startling in-

formation was vouchsafed; prophecies were made and fulfilled; past happenings and tragedies, hitherto undiscovered and unsuspected, were revealed by the table tipping and rappings, and yet more was continually demanded.

After a month of the table tipping, the genuine "raps" without the movement of the table began to come apparently as readily upon, within, or under the table. The location of the raps seemed difficult, but their employment rendered the task of interpreting the message more speedy, which was a very desirable point, and a distinct gain to the sitters.

But while the phenomena at the Riley home in the presence of strangers were very wonderful, the finest manifestations were received in the presence and in the homes of members of the family. The eldest of their children, Emma, was married to Samuel Billingham, and it was at their home that the first slate writing was received. This occurred after nearly a year had been spent in receiving the phenomena of table tipping and raps. The forces had been very strong one evening, and Emma said, "Father, I believe they could write on the slate." The notion was not encouraged, but Emma decided to see for herself, and she put a slate and pencil on the table, covering the same with a large bowl, which she inverted. The assembled company then joined hands and sang hymns, their voices dying away as they heard the rattling or tapping of the pencil under the bowl. The pencil then seemed to be writing and dropped, after which there was silence.

The company asked if the message was delivered, and three taps of the pencil announced that it was ended.

One of the company suggested that they finish the sitting before reading the message, when the inverted jar was suddenly thrown off the table and shattered. The daughter, Mrs. Billingham, then took the slate, and going to the light read the word "Mother" written on it. In answer to questions, the "force" at the table rapped the information that the spirit manifesting the slate writing was Jim Riley's mother. They sat for a long time that evening, but received no more messages on the slate; but after this breaking of the ice, slate writing became the accepted means of communication, and was regarded as a higher phase of manifestation by one step than the rapping. The method followed was invariably the same, the company sitting about the table, placing their hands on it, the light turned low, or turned out altogether, the slate lying in the middle of the table with a small piece of slate pencil placed on or in it.

John Benton, Riley's control, or guide as he is called, the spirit who cares for and conducts the seances which the medium holds, first manifested his presence by writing his name upon the slate at one of the slate-writing circles. This happened at a neighbor's house, somewhere about the year '86 or '87, and since that day the spirit of John Benton, or the intelligence calling itself John Benton, has remained installed as Riley's chief control. At a seance at his (Riley's) home, the intelligence wrote on the slate, "I am sent here to take charge of this medium." Signed, John Benton. The faithful circle sat all that winter, getting raps and slate writing and for two months at their meetings they discussed a message of John Benton's written upon the slate, which

read, "I want my medium to sit for materialization." But to this Riley was opposed. He had, up to this time, been as much of a spectator in the sittings as any in the audience. He had discussed and questioned. The idea was distasteful to him, that he should be made the unconscious instrument of phenomena which he could not analyze.

CHAPTER IV.

Sitting for Materialization—First Phenomena—Methods of Conducting a Seance—Conditions—One Point for Riley.

Finally after much discussion of the question, tossing it to and fro at their meetings, argueing pro and con, Riley agreed to sit for materialization, provided that his guide, John Benton, would take complete charge of the circle and manifestations even to the preparatory step of selecting the members who were to compose the circle. This, John Benton agreed to do, naming the persons who were to be admitted. The plan now followed out was to hold these meetings for materialization every Saturday night, sitting the first week at one house, then at another and so on around the circle. The company sat a long while before success crowned their efforts; many weeks went by before a single materialization occurred, but at length at the house of Mr. James, one of the circle, a hand materialized, waved through the curtains, and disappeared.

Riley's method of sitting for materialization has been but slightly varied all these years. He first sits in the room with the rest of the company, chatting upon any topics of interest, and encouraging general conversation. He is waiting for the impulse or "impression" to begin, to strike him. When this comes he is moved to get up

and signify to the company that he is ready. They pass into another room, off of which lies a smaller room which serves as a cabinet for the medium. A chair is placed in this smaller room, in which the medium sits during the seance. The members of the circle range their chairs in the form usually of an arc or semi-circle about the door of the smaller room; a black curtain, or better still, two black curtains, opening in the center to permit being thrown easily back from within or without, hang suspended over the entrance to the smaller room or cabinet, the door of which is either allowed to remain wide open, or taken away entirely. The smaller room or cabinet contains no window through which light can penetrate. If there is a window it must be closed up with heavy covering, for the medium's cabinet must be entirely dark when the curtain is dropped in front of the entrance. The medium requires nothing within the cabinet except the chair upon which he sits.

When he is ready to begin, Riley enters the cabinet and the curtain is carefully dropped by those without to exclude the light. The lights in the room are turned low, but not so low that the members of the circle cannot easily recognize each other's features. It is not necessary that hands should be joined, or feet set squarely on the floor, and general conversation is encouraged, such conversation being very difficult to pursue when members of the circle are anxiously awaiting the appearance of friends departed from this life. The singing of hymns is invited, and the endeavor is made to bring all members of the circle into harmonious accord. This can best be defined by saying that if a great wave of enthusiastic devotion, such as is obtained at a revival meeting in a

Methodist camp could possess the members of this circle, then the conditions for the presentation of strong (which means distinct and enduring) phenomena would be present. According to John Benton, Riley's control, the conditions brought by the circle chiefly determine the results of the seance—the phenomena.

There are many things to be taken into account, namely the physical condition of the medium at the time of giving the seance; the mental condition of the medium at the time of giving the seance; for instance, whether physically fatigued or worried; or back of this again, there are sometimes spiritual conditions which the medium cannot fathom, and concerning which John Benton can give no information, and which prevent good phenomena. Sometimes, for no reason that anyone can discover, there are no phenomena for a whole evening; and sometimes, with identically the same persons in the same circle, the phenomena are plentiful. However, it may be laid down as axiomatic that for the production of the best phenomena, there must exist the strongest bonds of harmony between the spirit force, the medium, and the members of the circle. When these are in accord, conditions are what they call right, and successful demonstrations are witnessed.

Upon entering the cabinet for materialization, Riley sits in the chair provided for him, and leans his head in his hands. His endeavor is now to make himself purely negative mentally, to dis sever his thoughts from anything that has interested or disturbed him during the day, and, in a word, to concentrate upon nothing. At first he experiences a peculiar nervousness connected

with this phase of mediumship. It is to him a good deal like his fancy pictures the entering into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. He has the sensation of floating away; his head feels light and swollen to twice its size; as though it is expanding,—going up, and carrying him with it; and then he knows no more until he comes out from under the influence.

Here enters another factor in determining the length of time which he can remain under control. It might be supposed that this depends almost entirely upon the spirit-guides, or upon Riley himself. According to John Benton, this is not the case; it depends upon the conditions furnished by the circle. If the conditions are not good, they—the spirit-guides—do not hold him, and he comes out quickly from his trance. Again, if the conditions are not good, the forms manifesting are weak, they are either indistinct, or they can show themselves but for an instant and then disappear. Or they may be unable to gather force sufficient to even show themselves at all, the limit of their strength resulting in a mere waving of the curtains to and fro as if weak hands were plucking at its folds.

Riley's materializations take the form chiefly of men attired in evening dress of an old-fashioned cut, and it is seldom that faces alone are seen. The form is usually complete, from head to foot, but of the characteristics of these forms, I shall speak more fully in another chapter. After materialization begins, the members of the circle are required to sing to strengthen the vibrations, the theory being not unreasonable that while singing, they are less apt to hinder the manifestations by a too search-

ing anxiety or by fear, and singing produces harmony. After perhaps fifteen minutes of trance, there is heard a cough from Riley behind the curtain, which means that he has been brought out of the trance by his control, Mr. Benton, and the curtain is then thrown back at once and the lights in the room are turned up.

He usually comes out of the cabinet now, and walks about the room and his wife usually has a cup of tea ready for him. He takes an interval of about ten minutes between each sitting, and then re-enters the cabinet. Singing is resumed in which Jim joins, and when he stops singing his wife will remark that they have "got" him. The phenomena now are much stronger, and when such is the case, he will remain in the cabinet for thirty minutes, and as many as ten or twelve forms materialize.

There is one point to which your attention is especially invited, as significant of the probability that the medium's physical condition has much to do with the success of the manifestations. This point is that Riley is now sixty-six years of age, and the phenomena of materialization are just as quick and the forms come out in front of the sitters, walk out into the room; and I have seen Mr. Benton, Riley's control, pick up Riley's little girl, four years old, and carry her around the room. This was fifteen years ago. It is permitted to every reader to draw his own conclusions from the facts presented in this biography, nevertheless I should be wanting in my duty, if I failed to point out the significance of this apparently irrelevant fact in its bearing upon the genuineness of the phenomena presented.

When the forms are materializing you can hear Mr.

Benton encouraging the spirits to materialize like this: "Be patient, and you can show yourself," or "Be careful and do not get excited and you can build your spirit form." To the merest novice in deductive reasoning, it must be evident that if these phenomena are fraudulent, the constant practice furnished by the work of years would permit an increasing celerity of execution and consequent improvement in the variety and number of spirit-forms at each succeeding seance whereas precisely the opposite result obtains; and though this result presages the decline of the powers of a great medium, it counts one for the honesty of his manifestations, expressing as it does the inevitable law of physical existence with resistless logic; the law of development and decay.

CHAPTER V.

Jim's Home—His family—Types of Americans—Mrs. Riley,
The Boys, and Minnie—Views of a Skeptic—Odd Phenomena.

To go back some fifteen years. Jim Riley's house stands just off the road, about three and a half miles from Marcellus, Mich. The house is of the cottage stamp, a story and a half high, with a plentitude of windows; front and back porch doors, the house having east, south and north entrances. The orchard lies on a slope to the east, and Jim's land runs back for twenty acres on the south side of the road. The appearance of the house from without is very pleasant, and within the effect is comfortable and bright. The rooms are well-furnished and everything, (thanks to Mrs. Riley's talent as a housekeeper) has a clean and spotless appearance; and the numerous windows in the rooms give the sun every opportunity to carry his healthful beams into the remotest corners. Even the front door of the cottage has a window in it. A more delightful place to spend a week in warm weather one could scarcely ask for, but the winters, according to Mrs. Riley, are not so pleasant.

To live with these sincere and unaffected folk in the intimacy of the family circle, to share their meals, greet their friends and neighbors, to visit their relatives, and

in a word, live their life is to acquire an insight into the family affairs of a group which might well stand as representatives of honest and rugged stock, whence America's best native blood is drawn. The family is typically American.

There is, first of all, Jim Riley himself, of medium height, clean shaven, a merry twinkle in his eye, jolly, and full of jokes, unaffected, unassuming, dropping into every colloquial speech, using dialect in preference to "book talk," but flashing out every now and then with thoughts clothed in phrase and sentence that might have been quoted by a college man without alteration of a word; generous and impulsive, hot-headed too, and independent, a close friend and a merry heart; too sensitive to criticism of an unkind nature, too easily pleased by praise; without malice or revengeful thoughts; a warm-blooded man with an ever present shrewd humor, that gilds his conversation and makes his company well-liked.

Then there is his wife, an ever busy woman; a good wife and good manager, making up in her thrift and sound economy for Jim's congenial improvidence. Mrs. Riley knows the worth of a dollar saved. Jim asks, "What is a dollar made for, if not to be spent?" Mrs. Riley is a manager of household problems, a woman of cares and anxieties, rather than a woman of enjoyment. She is without enthusiasm of any sort or kind, inclined by experience to see the cloud in the distance no bigger than a man's hand, foretelling the coming storm. Her husband has no stauncher defender than she, if any one be bold enough to attack his mediumistic powers in her

hearing, when she is not backward in his defense. She is no whit less direct in arraigning him to his face for his shortcomings in other and more domestic affairs. Thus she shows herself to be what she is, the type of the loyal, hard-working, uncompromising housewife, who, being all truth herself, expects all honesty from all others, and is indignant if the world disappoints her. Of Mrs. Riley it might be truly said that in all her honest life, she never stooped to flatter or truckle to any human being.

Then there are two boys, Fred and Bert, aged eleven and nine, respectively, and Minnie, aged three. Fred, the eldest, is by choice a hunter and trapper, has an eye that does not fail him on the wing shot, is musical and has the all round catholicity of taste that may make him anything. He's a wise man, who can say today what Fred will make of himself. Bert, the second boy, is well set up, and frank of manner—a good, sturdy boy with a tremendous appetite, and a huge appreciation of a joke; loving his home, but anxious to do something in the world. Bert will do well. The other member of the family is the baby, Minnie. A sweet little girl who helps her mother all the time with the housework, talks gravely with the boys about many things, lives her own life a good deal, and does not seem to be at all dependent upon the companionship of children of her own age; a very innocent, dear child, quite unspoiled and pleasant to look upon; wise, too, with the quaint wisdom of serious children. Minnie is the one whom Mr. Benton used to pick up and carry around the room; she looked upon him as her grandfather, and called him grandpa.

With these people I lived for two weeks, studying them, noting their strength and weakness, so far as I might, that I might be able to give the readers an insight into their daily life. While I have attended a great many sittings at Riley's house, during the past twenty years, my first sitting convinced me that Riley was an honest and genuine medium. This first sitting was wonderful, and a full description of it will be given in a later chapter.

This book is for skeptics; it is for those who do not believe because they are not satisfied with so-called tests; because they do not share the enthusiasm of the followers of a creed; because they doubt the integrity of the evidence presented by advocates; because they turn away dissatisfied from idle sarcasm and invective of the anti-spiritualistic writers; because they seek facts, and facts uncolored by dogma or devotion; because they will have the truth if they can get it. These are the brethren to whom my heart goes forth in greeting and respect. Let them draw their own conclusions as they may, of one thing they may be assured; there is no lie written here on any page, nor is any incident exaggerated or colored by fancy to strengthen a theory.

Questioning at odd times the members of this family, the information was gathered that their father had not encouraged the development of mediumship in any of them, but that occasionally clairvoyance had come to all four at odd times. For instance, Bert, when about fourteen years of age was standing outside of the house when he saw a boy go by him and round the corner of the house towards his little sister Minnie, who was sitting

on the step. Bert heard the boy call Minnie by name, and saw her look up, startled. She was not old enough at the time to talk, but she arose from her place and looked much frightened when the boy mysteriously disappeared. Bert was frightened himself. He had not noticed the boy very particularly, supposing that he was going into the house to see his mother. But the form disappeared, and neither Bert nor Minnie could give any explanation; Minnie, because she could not talk, and Bert, because he knew he had seen a spirit.

At another time when they were playing together with two other boys at a game called "blind," out in front of the house, among the trees, Bert saw the form of a young man hiding behind a tree, but as he approached, it wilted away. These are about the only manifestations of clairvoyance that have come to him, and the question arises, "If occasionally clairvoyant, why not always clairvoyant?"

The eldest boy, Fred, has no kind of doubt in his mind about the truth of spirit phenomena. He does not like the spirits, and does not want to have anything to do with them. He has seen them in the dark, albeit he is not a nervous boy at all or easily scared. But he has seen them, he says, and knows that they are there. It is impossible to shake the stories of these boys. The child, Minnie, has heard footsteps, has sat up in bed with her sister to listen to "the spirits" walking in the next room (the seance room) after everyone had gone to bed. When she was four years old, she used to carry about a slate with her, inviting the spirits to come and write for her, and hearing so much said in the household concerning

conditions, she used to caution her brothers sometimes to "make less noise or they would spoil conditions." But Minnie got no messages upon her slate until her father put his hand upon the slate; then she received a message from her father's mother. Sometimes the message purported to come from her mother's mother, the grandmother appearing to take great interest in watching over the future of the child.

CHAPTER VI.

A Night With Riley—The Dark Circle—The Materializing Seance.

As one seance is much like another, the writer will endeavor to make the reader familiar with the procedure which is followed at one of the Riley seances, following up the phenomena from beginning to end of the evening's enjoyment. Riley does not begin his sittings till eight o'clock in the evening. Let us suppose that the company, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and Mr. and Mrs. Jones, are assembled. They have come to sit with the famous medium; they have heard something of Spiritualism. Indeed, Mrs. Brown has had several sittings with mediums who have informed her that she is herself possessed of mediumistic powers. She asks Jim what he thinks on that point, and he replies enigmatically that he "shouldn't wonder."

You will not observe in Riley the affectations of impressive suggestions which the average medium gives to his sitters. Riley never "jollies" a sitter; and there is another point of difference which is quite striking. Almost every medium whom I have met deems it an honor when the guide is willing to "talk through" him; it is considered that great good accrues to the medium when the "control" uses him as an instrument of speech. Mr.

Riley does not take that view, although his wife does, and it has been a grievance to her that Jim will not let Mr. Benton, the control, talk through him when Mr. Benton wishes to do so. Mr. Riley desires, so he says, to do his own talking, which is very characteristic of him. He says, "Let Mr. Benton (Uncle John as he calls him,) use his body as an instrument if he wishes, but if Uncle John wants to talk, he must do so on his own account; anything that Jim says must come from Jim." He refuses to speak for another, or to be developed in that way; yet it has happened once or twice when Jim has either been in an exceptionally complaisant mood, or "off his guard" as he says, that John Benton has spoken through him, and on those occasions the voice is very deep and full, and the language well chosen and sometimes eloquent. Mr. Riley laments his defective education, although to an observer he would seem to have nothing to regret in this regard; but he is firm in his refusal to accept the gift of another's knowledge, to be used and proclaimed as his own. This is a queer distinction to make, but one cannot help respecting the medium for his obstinacy.

Mr. Riley, having signified to the company that he is ready, leads the way into the large room on the ground floor, off of which opens the smaller room which will be later used as a cabinet. He seats Mr. Jones next to Mrs. Brown, and placing his wife between the two men visitors, seats himself between the two ladies, and the circle is complete. They are seated about an ordinary table, having no cloth upon it, and when the lights in the room are turned out, there will be absolute darkness. Before the lights are extinguished, however, some musical in-

strument, or perhaps a music box, with a slate and pencil, are placed upon the table and each sitter links the little finger of his hand to the little finger of the person sitting on either side of him, keeping his own hands, palms downward, flat on the table, but not touching each other. The idea in this is that the current shall traverse the bodies of the sitters, and if they joined their own hands together, the effect would be to cause the current to run only from hand to hand, thus greatly lessening the amount of the forces drawn out.

When the lights are turned out by one of the company, and the circle has joined hands in the manner aforesaid, a hymn or sacred song is sung, a favorite being "Nearer, My God To Thee." During sometimes the first, and sometimes the second verse of this hymn, the musical instrument rises in the air, passes over the heads of the sitters, and, twanging chords as it flies, makes the circuit of the group, perhaps swaying as far as the wall behind the group before it returns to its place on the table. At the same time a phosphorescent light, about the size of a half-dollar appears apparently from the bosom of Mrs. Brown's dress, and wavering undecidedly to and fro, goes out, disappears, vanishes in a few moments.

Riley is perfectly conscious during these manifestations; he is not entranced, and takes as much interest in the phenomena as the sitters. At the close of the hymn, raps are heard on the table, and Mrs. Jones asks aloud, "Is sister Mary here? Is that you sister Mary?" Silence reigning, Mr. Jones says, "Perhaps it's Paul; is it you, Paul?" There are three terrific raps in affirmation. Yes, it's Paul, a departed brother, and Mr. Jones,

forgetting the limitations of the inquiry asks excitedly, "How is it with you, Paul?" The medium says, "Ask him something he can rap 'yes' or 'no' to." And Mrs. Jones inquires, "Do you think you can materialize to-night, and come to us?" Paul raps that he will, and the sitters are glad.

All this time Mr. Jones feels a hand caressing his head and patting him, and immediately after Mrs. Brown says, "I declare someone has pulled the hairpins out of the back of my hair!" Simultaneously, the musical instrument twangs a few chords, the end is poked into Mr. Jones' breast with some force, and the table vibrates perceptibly to the touch. Also, apparently at the same moment, Mr. Brown feels some one sticking hairpins in his hair and says so, and then there is hilarity,—Mr. Brown, having scant hair and small need for hairpins to hold it in place. This levity on the part of the attending spirits, having been received in good part, there is more singing followed by further phenomena of similar kinds. The lights perhaps, are more frequent and long messages are rapped out to inquiry, but as a rule the communicating intelligences avoid the lengthy messages, and give promises that they will try to appear at the materialization which is to follow.

Finally Mr. Riley says, "Well, let's go outside and take a rest," and the company retire to the other room and compare notes about the phenomena. Although Riley has always had a slate laid on the table at these dark seances, together with a small piece of pencil, I have not yet seen a communication written upon the slate at the dark circle. The slate writing has always been given during my sittings with Riley at materialization; never at

the dark circle. Upon asking Mr. Riley his reason for putting the slate on the table at the dark circle, he said, "It's best to have it there for them to use if they want to," which leads me to observe that it is to be noted of Riley that he gives free hand to his spirits in the matter of manifestations. He does not profess beforehand to know what they are going to do or say, or whether anything out of the ordinary will occur.

The dark circle, having lasted perhaps an hour, the members take a ten-minute rest, after which they are invited to re-enter the room in which they have had their sittings; the table is pushed away into the corner, and the chairs are arranged in a semi-circle in front of the entrance to the smaller room, which is to serve as a cabinet for the medium. Mrs. Riley sits next to the entrance to the cabinet, and as soon as Mr. Riley has entered she arranges the curtain at the foot to exclude all light from the cabinet. The lights in the room are turned down to a point at which it is possible to recognize the features of any member of the company, without difficulty, and a hymn is sung. There is no response from the curtain, and Mr. Brown suggests that Mrs. Brown start something; whereat Mrs. Brown shakes her head and says, "If only Mary were here,—she's such a one to sing!" Mrs. Riley begins to sing "The Suwanee River" and the others take up the refrain.

A depressing silence falls on the company, broken by four raps from the cabinet; Mrs. Riley explains that that means "sing" and the company sings again, "Oh Summer Land." At the conclusion of the third verse, after perhaps twenty minutes from the beginning of the sitting, there comes a waving of the curtain. The hymn

dies away, only one or two of the company retaining sufficient interest in conditions to keep up the tune by humming in a subdued way. The curtain continues to wave, and presently as Mrs. Riley begins again to sing, admonishing the company to join in, there appears a form in the opening of the curtains. He is visible to all present. He is about six feet tall, dressed in black, low-cut vest, white shirt, his face is pallid, his hair is gray, his face, clean shaven; a tall, strong well-built man of pleasant features. He bows to the company and Mrs. Riley says, "It's John Benton." The form bows again, and with the curtains still parted, sinks slowly down, a characteristic of all materialized forms. They do not appear and disappear; they sink and are gradually gone.

The company has now waked up to an interest in the phenomena; their period of waiting is forgotten, and they are most anxious to welcome friends from the other shore. Under Mrs. Riley's guidance, they again sing and are again rewarded by a moving of the curtains, keeping time in its waving to the cadence of the measure. They wait, with their eyes fixed upon the black curtain. Suddenly a scratching sound is heard, and a tap of a pencil, writing upon a slate, comes from the cabinet. The writing ceases and the slate is seen to be thrust between the folds of the curtain. Mr. Brown, under Mrs. Riley's instruction, asks, "Is it for me?" The slate is drawn back. Mrs. Jones asks, "Is it for me?" Mr. Jones, "Is it for me?" Mrs. Brown, "Is it for me?" The slate is thrust forward again. Yes, it is for Mrs. Brown. She is told by Mrs. Riley to take the slate into the next room where there is light and read the message. Mrs. Brown advances to take the slate and as she does so, the cur-

tains suddenly part, and a young man is seen with the slate in his hand. Mrs. Brown gasps and draws back, the slate drops with a crash to the floor, and the figure slowly sinks.

Mrs. Brown gathers herself together, picks up the slate, and going to the next room, returns with the announcement, "It's from Uncle Ephraim. He says that was him." Mrs. Brown is much excited, and naturally wants to know if Ephraim cannot come out again and tell his story. Mrs. Riley says, "Perhaps he'll come again," when there is heard another sound, a cough behind the curtain, the waving ceases, Mrs. Riley goes forward and throws back the curtain, permitting light to enter the cabinet, and some one turns up the light in the room; for the seance is at an end for the present.

Whenever Riley comes out from under the influence, he coughs, and whenever he coughs, the curtain is thrown back to give him a chance to breathe comfortably, talk, and allow the company to look at him. This phase of mediumship is not very pleasing to Riley, and he is never sorry when it is all over, "for," he says, "I dread to go into the cabinet;" but he has perfect confidence in Mr. Benton, that under any and all circumstances he, Benton, will take care of him. Then he walks about the room and takes some tea. He asks whether the phenomena are good tonight, and Mrs. Riley says, "Not very. They don't seem to have any strength to come out, and there are so few of them." But she says this hopefully, advising the company not to become impatient, and not to be too anxious; "because," she says, "we have found out that you can't hurry them."

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are comparing notes, Mr. and

Mrs. Brown are in an argument as to whether that looked like Ephraim or not; Mrs. Brown said she was too much "flustered" to take a real good look, but "if it was not Ephraim it was his twin, sure." From this, Mr. Brown dissents, pointing out that Ephraim wore a full beard, whereas this was a youngish man with a black mustache. Mrs. Brown reminds her husband of the fact that Ephraim did not always have a full beard to boast of, and recalls the days when his chin was as smooth as a billiard ball, and his hair "that black and glossy that you could see your face in it." Mr. Brown, discomfited, but still full of fight, retires from the argument, and Mrs. Jones asks Jim why Paul has not come as he promised. Jim says, "Perhaps he has not strength enough yet to come; wait a little." Mrs. Jones is not quite sure whether she ought to cherish a grievance against Paul, or against Jim, but is prepared to do both if the worst comes to the worst.

After a rest of ten minutes, Mr. Riley says, "Let's try it again" and all re-enter the seance room. The life has gone out of the company; they are disappointed. This is not at all what they expected. From what they had heard of Farmer Riley's seances, the spirits just came trooping out of the cabinet, and hung around your chair, exchanging confidences with you, and embracing you in the intervals. This waiting was dreadfully trying; why, you didn't know for certain that you were going to see any of them at all. Had they come fifty miles for this? They began singing in a disappointed kind of way, Mrs. Riley for the most part sustaining a solo, after advising the company to sing together if they wanted mani-

festations. "Unless you bring them the right conditions," she said, "they won't have strength enough to come out," and led off with "Nearer, My God To Thee" again. Mr. Brown joined in hoarsely, and Mrs. Brown was with him by spurts, but this effort was her last, and neither Mr. nor Mrs. Jones showed any disposition to join.

The waving of the curtain roused Mr. Jones from his seeming lethargy to remark that perhaps it was Paul, but Mrs. Jones contented herself with saying, "If it is, let him come out so we can see him, and not stand there, shaking the curtain like he was afraid to be seen!" Mrs. Riley said, warningly, "That's no way to get anything. You should try and help him; if it's him, speak kindly and lovingly to him and he may get strength to show himself plainly." There was violent waving of the curtains at this, and three strong raps from the cabinet in confirmation of Mrs. Riley's advice. But Mrs. Jones was beyond reproof and said with an undisguised yawn, that she only wished she was home in her bed; she was tired. If there is anything in condition, (and there must be surely) anything in harmony or sympathy, as conducting to get phenomena, it must have required the force of a Niagara to offset the influence of this company.

Again the curtain waved, and after shaking to and fro for perhaps five minutes, which seemed more like twenty minutes to the now expectant company, the figure of an old man, very decrepit, leaning on a cane, and having white hair, white beard, showed itself to the group and disappeared. "'Clare to goodness, it's more provoking than a cow!" said Mrs. Brown, and Mr. Brown said warmly, "Did you recognize him, Eliza? Didn't he remind you of some one you knew?" Mrs.

Brown said he did look like her grandfather, now she come to think of it, and Mr. Brown said, "Not your grandfather, Eliza, that was my uncle Benjamin, just as plain as I ever saw anything in my life." Whereat Mrs. Jones, with a last glimmering spark of vitality, announced that it looked more like "old Hank Travers that hanged hisself in his barn along of the Widow Mc-Tavish refusin' to marry him." But this was not acceptable to the others, and the matter was referred by common consent to the cabinet for settlement.

There was again a waving of the curtain; again raps, and just as the company believed themselves on the point of solving the mystery, the writing was heard again upon the slate, and it appeared at the side of the curtain, directed at Mrs. Riley. "This is for me," said Mrs. Riley; "when it comes like that, it's from Mr. Benton, and means something for me." And she took the slate into the next room to read the message. Returning in a little while, she said, "The message is from Mr. Benton. He says, 'Friends, the conditions tonight are not strong enough to permit us to manifest to you; the medium is exhausted. Good night.'" "Is that all?" then inquired Mrs. Brown. "Yes, it's no use going on," said Mrs. Riley, "when they say stop."

There was a cough from the cabinet and she threw back the curtain. Jim looked tired and weary sitting there with his head in his hands, coughing in a way that was bad to hear. "What did they get?" he asked his wife. "Not anything satisfactory," she said; "I didn't think they would," he said; "didn't feel right to me somehow." Out in the other room, Mr. Jones was telling Mrs. Jones that "maybe they was some of us over-anx-

ious, and some of us not anxious enough." "Well," said Mrs. Jones, "this ends it for me. I told you that I didn't want to come anyway," she added accusingly. "Didn't you say to me, this morning—" began Mr. Jones, in vindication, when she cut him off with, "If you're going to stay here all night, talking, keeping folks out of their beds, etc., etc."

In fine, the company disbanded, disappointed. The picture is not overdrawn in any particular. Viewing the occurrences dispassionately, and as a spectator merely, I began to understand why Jim Riley had not encouraged any of his children to develop their mediumistic powers. This is the result of a seance where the "conditions" are all wrong. Once more I call the reader's attention to the point that fraudulent manifestations are easily produced; that a bogus medium is very careful that his sitters shall one and all receive satisfactory tests, and that the trickster never permits his sitters to depart in a disappointed frame of mind. Jim smoked a cigar with me, after the company had departed. "It don't seem to be worth the trouble," he said, "but you'll see different results when the right people come."

CHAPTER VII.

Market Day in Marcellus—Local Politicians—Geo. Adams—Good Conditions at a Riley Seance—The Squire's Story—John Dewey.

The town of Marcellus, Mich., has a population of twelve hundred; has electric light and water works. The town is well supplied with cement sidewalks, plenty of shade trees, nice lawns, and modern houses, and good water. It has wide awake business men, has two banks, two hotels, flour mill and machine shop. The people are prosperous, and a general good feeling prevails among them. While the town voted down local option, and is wet, an intoxicated man is rarely seen on their streets.

The country around Marcellus is fine and crops rarely fail. There is a lake called Big Fish Lake within three miles of Marcellus, where there are a number of cottages and a great many resorters are there during the summer.

When Mr. Riley goes to town he is besieged on all sides by those wanting to come out that evening for a seance. Saturday night at Riley's house is a thing to be remembered. The crowds were so great in the old days that the household seldom got to bed any night in the week before two o'clock of the next morning. During

the year 1891 he gave a sitting every night for a year. Result: Physical and nervous prostration for Jim; loss of twenty-nine pounds in weight; and a complete cessation of all sittings until health was restored.

Those were the days when Jim went into the cabinet, and was hardly seated before forms appeared, walked out among the audience, shook hands and dematerialized there in the presence of all without going back to the cabinet. (And at this writing, August 10th, 1909, the forms materialize just as quickly as they did twenty years ago, and in a subsequent chapter the sittings we are now having will be given in detail.) Think of having a being, apparently of flesh and blood, grasp you by the hand with a grip that you will remember for days, look you squarely and kindly in the eyes, and say, "Good evening, I am glad to see you," in a firm, resonant voice. Then, think that while you are actually shaking hands with this form he dematerializes, gradually vanishes, leaving perhaps his hand in yours, till the last moment. He has all gone but his hand. You are looking at that, and are satisfied that it is flesh and blood; the touch is warm, the veins are marked, the skin soft and not clammy. While you are noting these things, the hand itself is gone, and your fingers clasp on your own palm, with nothing between.

Think of this! What does it mean to you? Where does the form gather its material? Where does it get its brain? Where does it get its voice? Think of it! Think of it! Not done in a corner, but in the presence of twenty or thirty persons at a time; not done once but done every night for weeks and months and years; done

so often, that the tremendous significance of the much simpler phenomena which I, myself, have witnessed at the Riley home, was unheeded by those present in the circle. Those phenomena will be duly set forth in their place now as they occurred. Some check had to be put on the gatherings after Riley's health was restored. It was thought at one time that he would not live, and hence those who sit with him now come by appointment, or are personally invited to attend.

Saturday night found a gathering of twenty-four people in the little home in the country. All kinds and classes of people, all ages, both sexes, and mostly Spiritualists; some of them, like John Dewey, (the large man in the corner who is telling funny stories to the Squire) having been a witness to the Riley phenomena for many years; some of them are young girls whose voices will be of use later when singing hymns. These good folk, as some small return for their evening's pleasure, insist upon bringing with them baskets of eatables, and the kitchen table is loaded with the products of the pantry. This gives the evening a picnic flavor of its own. The guests are assembled and ranged about the walls of the reception room, very silent at first, as is their wont, but they will talk later when they get warmed up.

A spectator, accustomed to quick, light conversation on any and every topic, among strangers, would set these people down as shy, or lacking in ideas. An extensive acquaintance with all sorts and conditions of men, has furnished me at least sufficient wisdom to understand that all men and women are alike in types of temperament, irrespective of class or calling; distinction of

wealth and rank does not affect the intellectual grip of the members of the masses and the classes. The farming community, the backbone of America, gives you just as keen logicians, just as sharp inventors, just as witty antagonists, just as good conversationalists as is yielded by a sifting of the classes. The only distinction lies in the method by which they come in contact with other minds. Above a certain point in the social scale *two* strangers fence with words to discover the mental standing of each other. They put their heads down and lock horns in conversational amenities. In the country there is always silence at first; the refuge of the impenetrable thicket; but when the country stag breaks cover, he shows as fine a head as any deer bred in the fenced plantation.

Mr. Riley is not feeling very well tonight, and the gathering misses his ready jest and hearty word. His oldest son, George, with his wife and babies, is here from the grape country, fifteen miles away, to stay over Sunday. His daughter, Dollie, is here too, on a short visit; she is a clever girl with leanings toward making a school teacher of herself. There is not a book in Jim's library from Washington Irving to "Antiquity Unveiled" which she has not read and pondered upon. Dollie has the American spirit of self-improvement; she admires intellect; she loves knowledge.

And here's the Squire telling his story about Jim Riley's mediumship. Experiences? Yes sir, a thousand experiences if anyone cares to hear them. "I remember," says the Squire, "one night when the conditions were good, John Benton, Jim's control, came right out

from the cabinet and stood before us. 'Good evening, friends,' he said, and walked back to the curtain. I spoke up, and says, 'Mr. Benton, before you go, I would like to shake hands with you if you will allow me.' He turned right around and came back to me. I stood up, and when he put out his hand, I put mine in it, and he gave it a good squeeze. Then he began to draw me towards the cabinet, holding my hand tightly—I couldn't have let go if I had wanted to; he took me right into the cabinet, and when I was in there, with the curtains parted as I went in, I saw Jim Riley, sitting there huddled up in a chair with his head bent forward against the sill of the door, same as he always sits when he goes under control, and there was John Benton, six feet tall, and a stately, kind-looking man. He stood right up there by the side of Jim, holding my hand tightly as if he'd never let go. Then he began to sink down through the floor, still holding my hand, and took me right down with him, till I was bent all up like this, (and the Squire illustrates his story) just holding his hand right close to the floor, and nothing else of him left. Then he let go, and I straightened up and turned out of the cabinet, and hadn't any more than got outside the curtains, when they parted, and there he was again, full size, right behind me." "But that's nothing," he added, "hundreds of people have seen more than that here in Riley's house."

"Do you mind the time they took Jim into the woods?" asked John Dewey, with a chuckle. "There was Sterns and a whole party of them. They had a camp out there and they said they were going to fix Jim out right, and if

he could get them any figures, or forms, or spirits, or anything else, up in those woods, in their own tent, he had to be mighty smart to do it, if it wasn't on the square. And they fixed it up so that things had to be on the level. They didn't care anything about Spiritualism in those days; the crowd wanted to find out if the phenomena were true or all a fake, and they were bound they would find out."

"They took Jim and showed him what they'd built up for a cabinet, and it suited him all right. (Jim's the easiest pleased medium, anyway, that I ever came across.) Then they waited for what they were to get; but you had better see Sterns or the Doctor, or Alec Taylor about that; they were up there. But I was in the store one day when they were talking about Jim Riley, and one man said it was all a fake. 'There's nothing to it but fake!' he said,—and Sterns came right up to him and says, 'You're prepared to back your opinion, no doubt, Mr.————,' he says. 'We have five hundred dollars right here in this book,' he says, 'that Jim Riley can get those phenomena any where you put him; and the money's yours if he can't.' 'Let me tell you,' he says, 'I was one of them that took Jim Riley up to the woods and I know what I saw.'"

All the chairs are now arranged in a triple row in front of the cabinet in the inner room, and it is nearly ten o'clock before they are all satisfactorily disposed of, and John Dewey is given the post of honor at the right side of the curtain, Mrs. Riley, on this occasion having her grandson in her arms, and sitting on the left of the curtain. The child has been promised that perhaps his

father who has passed to the other life will come to him, and the boy says he would like to see him; but sleep overcomes him soon, and his father does not appear at this seance. Mr. Riley says he is ready, and steps into the cabinet and John Dewey draws the curtains close.

CHAPTER VIII.

Forms Appearing—Doctor Cottrell—The Great Test—Giving a Medium a Suggestive Treatment.

There is an interval of silence before the fresh voices of the young women join with the deeper notes of the men in sacred songs. There is a full choir tonight, and conditions look well. When two verses have been sung, a noise of writing on the slate is heard from the cabinet, and it is signified in the usual way that the slate is for the little woman in black, sitting in the front row. She goes to the curtain and takes the slate (this is her first seance) and is bidden to take it out to the light and read. While she is gone, a form appears and points to John Dewey; John says, "It looks like Elmer." There are three quick raps which mean "Yes." John says, "If it's you, Elmer, maybe you can shake hands with me." The form appears again but for a second; then again, and this time extends his hand to John, who goes to the cabinet and grasps the hand in a hearty shake.

The little woman in black returns to the circle and as she rubs out the message on the slate, she hands it back to the curtains. Immediately, the curtains part and Elmer appears, taking the slate from her. The message, it seems was from him. John Dewey says, "Elmer shook hands with me," and the little woman says, "Why

don't he shake hands with me then?" She has recognized him clearly, as Elmer is a very near relative; but the circumstances do not concern the reader. She has no sooner said this, than another verse is sung, the form of Elmer again appears and holds out his hand to her; she goes to the cabinet, holds his hand and says, "Thank you." Elmer simply retires. She is much overcome and cries silently some minutes.

After more music, the tall form of John Benton shows itself, says, "Good evening," in a clear, pleasant voice—how unlike poor Jim's voice, who has the asthma—and disappears. There is a chorus of regret that he departs so soon, and presently a slate is put forth for the writer. It contains this message in bold script: "My dear Sir, we are trying to get our medium up to a higher vibration. We will help you all we can." John Benton. After this the form of an old man of most startling distinctness and perfection of detail waves aside the curtain near John Dewey, and takes a step forward. He is not recognized and appears only for a moment. No one knows him. There is a cough from Jim, and the curtain is put aside and he comes out of the cabinet, rests for a few moments and says, "We will try it again." The curtain is dropped. Jim does not move his seat to right or left during the seance; he sits, leaning forward with the top of his head pressing against the sill of the door casing; the door is thrown flat back against the wall; and curtains take the place entirely of the door. Remember that. The room is very small; it has been the writer's bedroom during his visit. The bed runs lengthwise down the room, and is therefore across the door.

the coverlet of the bed is white. Jim is dressed in black. During his breathing spells, while the curtain is up, one-half of Jim's black outline is distinctly to be seen against the white coverlet of the bed behind him. Every soul of that family is collected in the seance room; no one could get into that room without being observed, even if any outside aid were thought of,—a ridiculous supposition to any one who has lived in this house a few days.

The curtain has been dropped again, and a hymn sung, when a form of medium height with clean shaven lips and light beard on chin, waves aside the curtain beside Mrs. Riley. She says, "That looks like Dr. Cottrell." He is one of the cabinet guides, occupying a somewhat similar position to that of John Benton, but being less often visible. He again appears, this time in front, and shows himself to the circle; still not satisfied, he waves the curtain again near Mrs. Riley and appears and disappears several times. There is a curious persistence about him which is unlike the appearance of any other form this evening. In a few seconds, quick scratching is heard on the slate, and the slate is thrust out to Mrs. Riley. During her absence, the form of Dr. Cottrell again appears, and waves the curtain impatiently, it would seem. When Mrs. Riley returns to the room, the form again appears and beckons her to the cabinet, waving the curtains to and fro as she approaches.

The curtain is now waved back about a foot and a half, permitting a clear view of the white bed, and the black outline of Jim Riley sitting with his head jammed against the door sill, just as he was left when he went under

control ten minutes ago. Mrs. Riley brought her hand down with a smack. "Why, of course," she said, "I see now!" The curtain closed; Mrs. Riley was more pleased than I have seen her since my coming to the home. "The message on the slate," she said, "is signed Dr. Cottrell, and he writes, 'See my medie sitting in the cabinet.' Of course he wanted to give me one of his old tests. That was one of the old kind; he wanted me to see, and I couldn't understand. Sure enough, I thought he wanted me to shake hands with him, or something, but he just wanted to give us a strong test." Mrs. Riley was pleased.

Go back a moment and think this thing over. Here is a form without speech, but in no other single essential differing from all those other forms that had appeared at previous times to others, present at these seances. This form had the power of motion; it could write, seemingly; it could also wave back the curtain. Whence did it collect those atoms, necessary for the creation of a body of substance? This was a solid body; others have testified to grasping this seeming solid until it melted away to nothingness. It would seem then, that chemistry of the spirit world can make such sport of our laws of psychics, that we stand before them in self-confessed ignorance of the rudiments of their science. And yet, oh, doubly wonderful fact! they seem unable thus to manufacture substance, visible to our eyes, without the aid of our living magnetism as given off by our physical bodies. How our boasted incredulity and skepticism crumble at the touch of a single solitary fact.

Mr. Riley's cough ended this sitting; Mrs. Riley told him of the test. Speaking of it afterward, Jim said to

me, "It's a long while since Martha has been so pleased; I'm glad the phenomena are so good. They must be very good when she says so, because she has seen so many of them." The circle had broken up, gone in search of supper. Mr. Riley was feeling very bad; said he was sick at his stomach; the thought of supper or food was revolting to him; said he would lie down for a while. "A strong test like that," he told me, "seems to make me awful sick." He lay down on the couch. No one seemed to think there was anything the matter with him. "Why don't you send them home and let that test stand for tonight?" I asked. "That wouldn't do," said Jim. "They are used to seeing me go under for hours, and keep this up till two o'clock in the morning; they don't know how sick I feel; just as if every bit of my body was shaken upside down." He closed his eyes and in a few minutes was fast asleep. He must have slept for twenty minutes. Then his wife brought him some strong coffee, but he couldn't drink it yet. His head ached. He lay down again, and went to sleep while the members of the circle enjoyed a good supper and discussed the phenomena. Poor Jim! he did not get much fun out of the affair. He suffered, that humanity might be enlightened about this great truth. Surely he will be rewarded when he makes the change to the other life.

After perhaps an hour, he said he could eat some supper, and drink his coffee, so his wife brought him some food. It was after twelve o'clock when he said that he would try again, and see what he could get; and the company assembled in the seance room. Jim's cough could be heard through the whole of "Nearer, My God,

to Thee" and "Summerland" and it was remarked that it "took so long for him to go under control." Presently the form of a young man appeared at the curtain, showed himself for a moment and disappeared. He was not recognized. Following this, came another, also a man, and this speedily disappeared. A slate was in a few minutes handed out to Mrs. Riley bearing a message from John Benton to the effect that the medium was not well enough to continue the seance, and the circle was broken up.

CHAPTER IX. ✓

An Interesting Seance in the Woods of Northern Michigan—
The Phenomena—The Freckled Woman—Doctor Shillito—
Inflammatory Rheumatism—A Spirit Photograph.

In the fall of 1893, a party of ten or a dozen men from Marcellus went hunting in the woods of northern Michigan. They were out for a two weeks' camping vacation, and away out there in the woods, five miles from the nearest house, they built a little shanty of boards ten by twelve feet, just large enough to hold them. They took with them, blankets for covering, and cooking utensils, but no chairs or camp stools. Jim Riley had been invited to make one of the party. He had been working pretty hard and was run down and thought perhaps a hunting trip and living in the open air would build him up physically. Nothing was said about a seance in the woods of course; the company had their plans, but kept their own counsel. Jim decided to go. The subject of Spiritualism was not broached for some days.

The hunting was good and game plentiful. It was the custom of the party to pair off each morning and hunt in couples. One night after supper the campers collected in a group and discussed something among themselves. Jim did not join them; he had the impression they were talking about him, and he stayed where he was. The

next day it fell to the lot of Sol Sterns to be Jim's partner, and when the party left camp and separated for the day's sport, Sterns and Jim set off together.

They had gone but half a mile from camp, when Sol said, "Jim let's sit down and rest a minute." Jim said, (knowing what was coming), "Why you're not half a mile from camp, Sol, you don't want to rest yet awhile. Come on." "No Jim," said Sol, "there's something the boys wanted me to speak to you about. What's the matter with your giving us a show up here in the woods, Jim?" "I don't give shows," said Jim. "You mean a seance." "Oh, that's it, yes," says Sol, "the boys would like to have you give them a seance." "No, it won't do, Sol," says Jim; "it's this way. You fellows are all good friends of mine,—I couldn't get anything for you. I couldn't feel right to get anything for you. I would never let you come up to my house to sit, nor I'm not going to sit for you up here. I came out to have a good time. So did you, and we're all having a good time. Now if I sit for you, I couldn't get anything for you, and you'd say, 'there's nothing to it'; so I guess I'll save myself the trouble and we'll all keep good friends; because, you see Sol, if I did give you a sitting, I know there would nothing come of it, and you'd some of you say what you thought about Spiritualism and the like of that, and then there'd be a scrap right away, for I wouldn't stand for any talk of that kind. So we'll go on as we are, Sol, and we won't have anything to break up the harmony of this camp."

Sol expostulated and argued, but Jim was firm, and when they got back to camp, Sterns reported the failure

of his mission to the others. After a conference, Dr. Shillito and Alec Taylor approached Jim. "Say Jim," said the Doctor, "the boys would take it kindly of you, if you would give us a sitting out here in camp. We've heard what you said to Sol, and we give you our word now, that if you'll just sit for us, there won't be a word said on the subject of Spiritualism while you're in this camp. Not a word. If any man broaches the subject, whether there's any phenomena or not, if he mentions Spiritualism unless you speak of it yourself first, we will undertake to kick him right out of camp. That's our promise, Jim." So Jim said that was all right. "He didn't think," he said, for a minute that he could get them anything out there, because he was dead sure he would have no confidence in himself; he'd be feeling the want of the home surroundings, and he'd be scared; but if they wanted it, he'd try, that was all; he promised nothing.

This was all satisfactory, and the campers went to work to build a cabinet for Jim inside the little shanty. They piled up a bundle of hay in one corner; that was for Jim to sit on when he went under "control." They fastened two blankets up to the roof inside, and strung them across a corner of the shanty, making a little dark box that served the purpose of a cabinet; they took away all extra blankets and sheets, and were so solicitous about keeping out all rays of light from the interior of the cabinet, that they brought armfuls of dry leaves and laid them against the corners, and about the floor so that if Jim should forget himself and do any moving about inside the cabinet, it would be mighty easy to hear him.

Oh, they were ready for Jim, and they felt sure no spirits would materialize up there in the wilds of Michigan.

When all was complete, Jim went into the cabinet and told Henry Loveridge to attend to the lamp. Henry has a bakery and confectionery store today in Marcellus. Not one of this party had ever sat with Jim Riley before, and Jim had no more idea when he went into the cabinet that any phenomena would come than had Tim Taylor who was lying on his elbow, watching the proceedings. Tim at the time was prepared to bet two hundred dollars as he said afterwards that "there wouldn't nothing come of it." To no one in particular was given the task of attending to the curtains. "Now boys, sing something," said Jim; and they began to sing discordantly. Jim found it hard work to get under control.

Finally he stopped them. "It isn't noise I want," he said, "it's harmony. If you can't sing, you can count out loud, and count all together; that may give us the right vibrations." (There's an idea that is worth something. What put it into Jim's head that counting would give results, when inferior singing would not?) He gets impressions from his control, Uncle John Benton, as he familiarly calls him. So they counted aloud with a measured swing, and had reached fifty or thereabouts when a form appeared at the cabinet curtain. It was recognized by Sol Sterns as his father. Out they came, one after another, thick and fast, and these men who had been lying on their elbows on the ground at the back of the shanty, sat up in wonder and interest. The forms came out strong and clear, and were recognized here and there

by some of the company; many came who were not known.

Finally came Alec Taylor's wife. Henry Loveridge was so determined that he would have a good view of all that transpired that as soon as a form appeared, Henry, in whose care the lamp had been placed, turned up the wick and directed the full blaze upon the form. When Alec Taylor's dead wife appeared, the light was so strong that they said afterwards you could clearly see the freckles on her face. (She was a much freckled woman, according to report.)

The seance lasted a long while, and Jim said later that he believed being out there in the woods so close to nature helped him through it. "It seems to me," he said, "from what they told me, that all the spirits in the country came there on purpose to bring me out all right." Tim Taylor said to Jim that if he hadn't seen what he had seen, he would have given two hundred dollars of his money to say it couldn't be done. "Now," he said, "I wouldn't give a cent because I saw it done, and I know it's true," which is one way of putting it.

Dr. Shillito was greatly impressed. Some months later, when Jim was laid up with inflammatory rheumatism and couldn't move hand or foot, the Doctor was attending him. One night, the Doctor brought his wife along to visit Jim. "I wonder, Jim," says the Doctor, "if you could get anything for my wife now, sick as you are? She has never seen anything of the kind, and if you wouldn't mind trying, it would be a great kindness. We could fix you up in a chair, right here in your bedroom, wrap a couple of blankets and a quilt around you,

and you wouldn't take cold—no danger of it. I'd like to know, Jim, if anything would come to us tonight."

So they took Jim, sick as he was, and swathed him in blankets and set him in a chair in his bedroom and hung blankets in front of the door of his room for curtains, while they sat out in the other room, and formed a circle. Jim was soon under control (mind you, he couldn't put his foot to the floor at this time), and forms came out which were recognized both by the Doctor and his wife. The Doctor recognized the form of a dead colleague whom he had known for years and who had worked side by side with him in the hospital. It was a very successful seance, so far as manifestations went, and some would say it would be injurious to Jim; but Mr. Benton would never have consented to this sitting if it would injure Jim; he knew, and pressed Jim to consent to the sitting.

In a later chapter an account will be given of Jim's entire cure of rheumatism by a noted physician in the spirit world. It was some months after this, that Mr. Perkins, a photographer from Kalamazoo, Mich., had several sittings with Jim. Mr. Perkins was very much interested. The writer knew Mr. Perkins who was a medium for Physical manifestations, and the sittings were very interesting to him, he having attended several at his residence. What Mr. Perkins saw at Mr. Riley's sittings was simply wonderful. He said to Jim, "I would like to come again and bring my camera, and take a flash-light picture of a materialized form." Jim said he didn't know how that would be; they had better ask Mr. Benton. John Benton said he would do what he

could to build a form which would stand the flash, and accordingly at his next visit, Mr. Perkins appeared with his camera and chemicals.

The seance was quite successful; the conditions were good; but John Benton said it would be late before he could have the form in readiness. The company, therefore, sang and waited, and a little after midnight the photographer was warned to be ready. He adjusted his camera and waited. "We are all ready here, Mr. Benton," he said. It was agreed then that three strong raps were to be tokens as the signal to flash the light. The signal was given; the flash went off; but whether too soon or too late, no one knows. The picture taken, shows two forms, a child and a full-grown man, apparently transfixed through the curtain, instead of being outside of it. Simultaneously, with the flash, there was the sound of a falling body in the cabinet, and poor Jim was picked up, still insensible, from the floor, having been knocked clear off his chair by the shock. He "came out" in a couple of minutes, but he could sit no more that night, and it was several days before the nausea and weakness following the experiment wore off.

Jim notes a very peculiar fact about "controls." "It seems to me," he says, "that Uncle John did not know what effect I would get from the flash-light, for he is always so careful." We all love Uncle John, as we call him. He is a fine character. "It must be," says Jim, "that they know what a little while we have to live here anyhow, while they have all eternity before them."

CHAPTER X.

Jim's Philosophy of the Hereafter—The Mission of Spirits— The Gospel Development.

Of all the mediums the writer has known, Jim Riley is the only one that ever struck him as an original thinker. By this is meant no discredit or disparagement to the others in so far as their mediumistic powers are concerned, but they have not seemed to give evidence of anything more than parrot-like rendering of the opinions of writers on Spiritualistic philosophies and they are incapable of *originating* objections to the currently accepted hypotheses or explanations of the phenomena which they produce, or are produced by them. All of his life, Jim has been a student, searching for an explanation. He wants to "know why" always. He has sat up far into the morning when he should have been in bed, comparing his physical sensations with the phenomena, and seeking to deduce a reason why a power should be his which is not given to others, and his philosophy of life hereafter runs something like this: "Death is just a change, a dropping away of the physical body; we put it off, as we put off a suit of clothes. Like the locust that crawls out of the ground; he sticks his claws in the bark of a tree, crawls out of his shell, and flies away—is born again. Likewise is man. When the spirit

leaves the body, he attends his own funeral. He sees those who weep, and those who scorn."

"The spirit finds itself in a world where development is as much expected of it, as it is required on earth. Man is a progressive creature; he never falls, he progresses here as well as in the hereafter, a world where loving, both towards other spirits, and towards those remaining on earth is required for the fulfilling of its destiny. In this new world, which we on earth call 'heaven,' the spirit is free to choose its pursuits, but it is made plain to it, that a life of self-indulgent happiness is impossible to the spirit that seeks to develop itself towards the highest good. John Benton comes to me, not because he is driven to come, but because it is a mission, a sort of duty which he gladly undertakes. After it is performed, after I have passed over myself, this will end John Benton's task or purpose on earth, for so he says himself. Eternal progress is the law of development on the other side; there is never a time for any spirit to say, 'I have learned all there is known; I have done all that is to be done.' There are spirits on the other side whose development gives them authority to teach, to instruct. Sometimes Mr. Benton will tell me that he will be absent for several days, attending a temple of learning, and if we try to get the phenomena, we do not. There is always employment for all; there is abundant happiness for all; there is immeasurable forgiveness—but the forgiveness is not expressed in terms of speech. There is no judge who condemns. Forgiveness of sins is shown by fellowship with higher orders of spirits. When the higher spirits seek the companion-

ship of another spirit, it means that the other has developed to a point at which he has seen the folly or sin of which he has been guilty in the past, and has made amends. He has made amends, this new spirit, by suffering for the evil he has done; he has sorrowed in spirit in this new life. There is no hell, but that which lies within the spirit itself. He has not made amends, or received forgiveness in a moment, in a day, or two days. He has seen his guilt in himself, and he has made amends by service to others. Perhaps he has been sent on a long mission to earth to help some of those who are seeking comfort there. Perhaps he has been commissioned to attend some other guilty soul on earth, and is winning happiness for himself by trying continually to impress higher aims, better thoughts upon the minds of this depraved brother or sister. This is what we mean by spirit service."

"There are also spirits who are received on the other side by spirits of a like order, who are without these higher aspirations; who have lived a sinful life on the other side. These spirits are very close to earth, and find their pleasure in inciting human beings to vice and crime of every description. It is the mission of spirits of a higher order than these, to visit them and try to influence them to seek a higher development. Thus the work of the 'ministering angel' is not a fable or myth, but an actual fact."

"In just the same way that human beings of certain tastes and aspirations gather together in colonies and meet in sympathy, do spirits on the other side gather together in bonds, attracted to each other by like hopes,

aspirations, tastes, pursuits, and ideas. Thus heaven is a place wherein the inhabitants are separated into grades or conditions, only by their own personal qualities; like attracts like; and thus are brought about the various grades of development which have been christened 'spheres of being' by some writers."

"I cannot better describe the absolute freedom of the spirit world, than by saying that heaven is a place where there is no compulsion. It is left to the spirit to decide whether he will shun evil and choose the good, making amends for his former evil doings; or whether he will continue to follow evil. But in spite of this absolute freedom of will, make no mistake upon one point. Happiness lies intrinsically in the doing of good. The spirits who follow evil are not punished as we understand punishment, but they are not happy. They seek fierce pleasure and find it, but they do not know happiness. They cannot know happiness or content until they have experienced remorse and suffering. How closely the two worlds touch in their philosophies of good and evil! There never was a doctrine preached on earth which is not an echo of the truth of heaven. The regeneration of the Methodist camp is a spiritual fact; the 'elect' of the Presbyterians is a spiritual truth; but how far short of the reality of the freedom of heaven do these human concepts fall! Man, setting himself up as the mouth-piece of God, has burnt, slain, and tortured his fellow men for centuries. In the name of religion he has committed outrage and atrocities; in the name of Jesus Christ he has shed his brother's blood. Even today, when happily in this free country man is permitted to worship

God as he pleases, creeds divide the community into sects, and there is bitterness and hatred between worshipers of the same God."

"The spirit that passes the portals of death is born into the new life, a Baptist, a Methodist, a Catholic, a Freethinker,—just what he was on earth. He does not find that his beliefs fall from him as his body fell from him at death; he has left his body behind, but he takes his beliefs with him, and he continues in those beliefs, crude, imperfect, blundering, as they are, until he is prepared, little by little, to receive the grand philosophy of heaven itself. His ability to perceive the truth is dependent entirely upon his development. There are in heaven today, countless spirits who wait for the appearance of Mahomet; there are those who look for a meeting with the Christ Jesus; there are those who look to be numbered with the chosen; there are those who look for nothing, and care naught for goodness. Little by little, as they develop, they see that their old beliefs and creeds and forms and ceremonies were all, in a measure, good but imperfect, narrowing, obstructing them from receiving the free light of God's truth. Little by little, they understand that Jesus Christ was indeed a son of God, having, while in the flesh, because of the conditions of his birth, and because of the sustained purity of his thoughts and manner of life, powers which transcended the powers of man as set forth by man today. Little by little, as their understanding grows, they see the great basic truth of Christ's teaching; they see that they also are sons of God, even as he was; they see that to him were given no special privileges; that the powers which

were his, and the love which was his, and the service which he rendered were all expressions of the divine nature, which were possible to every human being born under the same conditions, and living the same life of unison with God."

"They see then when they can understand it, that the significance of Christ's work on earth lay in the fact, unheeded yet by men, that Christ was man, born as man is born, begotten by Joseph, born in wedlock, but born under the uplifting spiritual conditions of Mary's inspired hope and trust in the promise of the angel's visit. When Mary 'treasured those sayings in her heart' she formed the character of Jesus, her offspring. These things are taught, as he can hear them, to the spirit in search of the truth, and something then of the beauty of the mission of Christ upon earth is shown him; when he can hear these wonderful truths reverently; when their immense significance enters his soul. Ah, then perhaps, he looks back with wonder at his old self. He does not love his Christ the less because he now knows him to have been man; he knows of a certainty that Christ was the son of God, and the mission of Jesus is summed up for him in the sentence 'Every soul born into the world is a son of God.'"

"Beyond and above the spirit that has just passed across to the other side, are the spirits of those who have learned what he is to learn, who knows what he must know, and who are striving yet to know what he will some day strive to learn—of God the Ultimate, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning of all things, the Father of the Universe. The most advanced spirit knows no

more than he knew on earth, but the way of Christ is plain before him. It is for the spirit to develop now in heaven, as Jesus, his brother, developed on earth, through great love and sacrifice, doing the will of God, the Father, with his face set ever toward the sun of Goodness which shineth ever more and more unto the perfect day."

CHAPTER XI.

Jim's Philosophy of Mediumship—Vibrations—Sex Force—The Law of Materialization.

Riley's philosophy of his mediumship is as simple and direct as his philosophy of the hereafter. He says, "Every human being is naturally a medium undeveloped; that is to say, every human being can, by development come into rapport with the spirit world which will enable him to receive communications from the departed. But the difficulty of communication does not rest entirely with the medium. By sitting for development the medium is brought into a higher rate of vibration than when in his normal condition, and this is being entranced as we say. But when in the trance state, it is not every spirit that knows enough of the law of communication to take advantage of the abnormal condition of the medium. For example, the reason why we cannot normally see and converse with spirits is because their vibration is so much higher than ours. When the medium's vibrations have been raised by entrancement, it is then necessary for the spirit to lower its own vibrations to the point at which it becomes visible to the eye of the medium; so they meet half way. This is something of which many spirits are ignorant."

“John Benton, my control, knows the law, but he is learning many new things himself. Although his work is to build up the forms of other spirits who come to my circle, so that they may be recognized by those present, there sometimes comes a spirit to whom even he has to give place, and whom he recognizes as on a higher plane than he is. Spirits are learning their lessons just as we are learning them. Everyone who sits for development in mediumship, will become a medium of some kind or other; not everyone can be a materializing medium; not everyone can be a fine inspirational speaker; but all can get into the vibration in which it is possible to receive indubitable evidence of the truth of spirit return.”

“During some of our seances, wandering spirits came to us giving us messages sometimes by raps, sometimes by slate writing. They would not give their names. They said they were passing by, saw the signal out, and knew they could call. It sounds funny, doesn't it? Genuine materialization makes strong demand upon the medium's vitality. This is sex-energy. Sometimes when I have not given a sitting for several days, I feel myself being 'drawn on' by the disembodied, and the same feeling of exhaustion comes over me, which follows a long seance. This energy is given off as magnetism, and is given off so much more freely by one who is a developed medium, that he is likely to be 'tapped' by those spirits who need some of his strength.”

“There is something I am going to tell you, which has never been told before, so far as I know. Perhaps it is not known to be true, but I have reasoned it out, and

this is the way I account for it. John Benton tells me that in heaven there is as Christ said, 'neither marriage, nor giving in marriage' but there is the union of the male and female. There is the marriage of the soul, the companionship of sex, the love that is purged from the grossness of the earthly passion, and is pure and holy in its manifestations. This is one effect of the quickened vibration of the spirit life, and just this same effect takes place in the highest form of mediumship, namely, materialization. The medium is brought to a quickened vibration by assistance of the spirit forces. When it becomes possible for him to produce materializations, he is already part spirit, that is, he is virtually in spirit life, and when brought out from this influence is of earth again. He is spiritual in his tastes, and marriage as we know marriage on earth, is not for him. His affinity is a pure affinity, a companionship, only. This is a strange fact, but it is a truth and admits of a scientific analysis. If it is properly followed up, it should furnish the key to the production of the phenomena of materialization."

"The spirits require from the medium something which they cannot get even from the many members of the circle. They entrance the medium, and while in this condition his vibration is raised to a point at which that energy which in the normal man is converted into sex-energy is used by the spirit forces for the presentation of their forms in visible and tangible shapes in substance. The sex-energy, it seems to me, can only be used for one purpose,—the creation of life substance. Whether it be used in the reproduction of the species,

or in the presentation of materialized forms, it has fulfilled its purposes."

"There is another deduction to be made from this premise. It is this: a materializing medium is the one in a circle of sitters from whom this sex-energy can most easily be drawn by the controlling forces. And there is another point that follows this, namely, that a materializing medium is a sort of storage battery for this force. He collects it from others in the circle and he draws it from those with whom he comes in contact, though of course, in a less degree, when he is not entranced. Thus, when I say that the spirits draw energy from every member of the circle, and that they cannot sometimes get the right vibrations to manifest, I mean more exactly this: that they can use this energy only for their materialization when it has been drawn from the circle and added to the energy of the medium. When vibrations are quickened in the circle, when there is harmony, then the circle gives off this energy freely; then this energy from the circle passes through the medium before it is used by the spirits for their materializations. That makes the importance of right conditions clear, I think."

If the medium, at any time chooses to give up his materializing work entirely, he will return to his old rate of vibration, his magnetism is less and less freely given off, it is more and more difficult for spirits to draw from him, and he becomes less of a sensitive. He gets fewer impressions. He neither receives nor gives as freely as before. He is shutting himself again in the shell in which the normal individual encases himself against

the approach of visitors from another world, the disembodied. In proportion as he shuts himself off from these communications, will his sex appetites and sex power return to him. And this is the law and philosophy of that which has been a mystery to man since the Witch of Endor called up the shade of Samuel—the act of materialization.

CHAPTER XII.

Evil Manifestations—Disturbance in the Cabinet—Injuring the Medium—How the Evil Influences Came—Clyde Goodrich—Rev. Father Hogg—A Remarkable Case.

There is a darker side to the phenomena of materialization, one which is rather avoided by writers on the subject, but which should be faithfully recorded and analyzed in a work which purports to give facts and truth only, whatever be the effect of such facts upon the philosophy itself. There is a "rough" side to Spiritualism. There are spirits of good, whose office it is to bring messages of peace and goodwill to the sitters, and whose presence diffuses an atmosphere of light; but there are also spirits of evil, whose entrance into the earth atmosphere is revealed by manifestations of malignant intent toward the medium and circle, more especially toward the medium. Paul's recognition of spirits of good and evil tendencies is well known, and his advice to "try the spirits whether they be of good" is literally significant.

Before giving an account of what took place at some of the Riley seances when these powers of darkness were in evidence, let us hear what John Benton said regarding their power to make themselves manifest. When anything unusual appeared at these circles, John

Benton, who acted always as, in some sort, the manager of the phenomena, was appealed to for an explanation. The question was asked frequently by Mrs. Riley and those most concerned, why he (John Benton) permitted the entrance of the evil spirits to the cabinet, John replied simply that he could not help it. He said, "If you could only see them,—if you could only see how they come in armies,—how great their numbers are,—you would understand how it is that our band is not strong enough always to withstand them." Jim said lately in discussing this very matter that he believed that this was one of the things which John Benton had learned in spirit life; namely, how to overcome the influence of the lower grade of spirits, and how to render their attempts to enter the circle futile. For it is a fact that these troublesome phenomena which occurred several years ago, have of late years been seldom witnessed. Nor did it appear that these phenomena were due to some special inferiority of aim or character in the personnel of the sitters. The circle was changed frequently but the manifestations were still malignant.

For the first three hours, for instance, the seance would be progressing nicely; forms which were eager for recognition would come in numbers, and everything pointed to a successful sitting. Then, for no reason that any one could determine, there would come a long interval of silence, during which no manifestations were visible. The circle would continue singing hymns, waiting for the renewal of the manifestations. At first they could not understand the reason of the sudden silence and general blankness. Mrs. Riley would ask John Ben-

ton for information what to do. She would say, "Do you want us to keep on singing?" Then from the front of the cabinet, near the circle, the point where John Benton's raps ordinarily came from, would come two raps, meaning "No." From other parts of the cabinet would come a multiplicity of raps, signifying, "Yes." Later when they were grown wise by experience, the circle came to know that when this seeming confusion of purpose showed itself in the cabinet, there was trouble brewing, and Mrs. Riley would then take it upon herself for Jim's protection to at once lift the curtain and throw the light in. At such times she has seen as many as four slates circling about in the air over the bed, to fall down with a clatter as quickly as the light fell on them. Jim would be sitting there in his trance as usual, but after a few minutes the light brought him out from under control. This, it seems to me, is a most interesting phase of the subject and should not be at all glossed over or suppressed.

In point of fact, these manifestations supply as good an argument in favor of the spiritualistic doctrine being true as one could wish. We have heard more than enough of the wearisome theory that all these manifestations are properties of the subconscious intelligence of the medium if the manifestations are genuine. But it is a part of that theory that the subconscious mind looks over to the protection of the interests and life of the medium. I shall await with some interest an explanation from the supporters of the aforesaid theory of how a subconscious intelligence shows its protection of the medium by hitting the medium over the head with the

jagged edge of a slate with such force that his head is cut open in several places and there are bumps on the skull for a week afterwards.

At this time Mr. Clyde Goodrich, a druggist in Marcellus, was sitting with his wife two or three times a week at the Riley seances, and he was so impressed with the danger of these evil manifestations that he advised Mrs. Riley not to go near the cabinet to pick up the curtains, but to have an instrument made in the form of an arm with a hook at the end, by means of which she could lift the curtain to terminate the seance as soon as "the racket" in the cabinet warned her that something was wrong. John Benton said that the singing helped the evil spirits to manifest and he therefore rapped "No" to warn the circle. Mrs. Riley says that the evil spirits seemed to have just as much power to materialize as the good spirits.

Only once was one of these spirits recognized by a member of the circle, but they would come right out in the circle, and take the slates in their hands, Mrs. Riley says, and break them in pieces over the stove. They would shake their fists in her face, and when she went to the curtain, they would clutch at her, but never did her any bodily harm. Before the circle had learned enough about these manifestations to interpret the confusion of raps as meaning that the bad spirits were in force, there would be noises and "a racket" in the cabinet. The spirits amused themselves by throwing things at the medium. The pictures were stripped off the walls; the water pitcher was on one occasion thrown through the curtain and broken in pieces; messages of a bloodthirsty

significance were written on the slates, such as: "We will hurt this man if you don't stop your sittings." On one occasion, at Nesbitt's house, Jim Riley was found when the curtain was thrown back by Mrs. Riley, still unconscious, but bleeding on the head from nine cuts, and other ridges or lumps formed on his skull next day, which he supposes were caused by the pounding of the slates on his skull before the frames broke, the cuts being made later by the jagged edges of the slates.

It may be asked why John Benton who is supposed to have the management of these little affairs, did not release the medium from the influence before the evil spirits got control. Jim says, in explanation, that he did not think John Benton knew how to exert his control when the evil spirits came in force, but he accounts for the infrequent manifestations of those spirits at the present day, on the ground that John Benton has learned how to control them, and for the past twelve years they have rarely made their appearance.

There was one phenomena which occurred at that time which sounds incredible but which is only more wonderful *in degree* than those which have already been recorded here. It was this. Hearing the confusion of raps and the noise in the cabinet, Mrs. Riley went in quickly, raising the curtain, and she was just in time to prevent these evil ones from dropping the door on Jim. They had taken the bolts that hinge the door fastenings, and had swung the door round in such a way that when it fell, it would just hit Jim on the side of the head with considerable force. When Mrs. Riley entered the cabinet, this door was just swaying towards Jim, sitting in

his chair with his head against the door-sill. Mrs. Riley caught the door before it fell, and this broke up the seance for the night. The bolts were found upon the bed.

These evil influences came with greater or less frequency for a few years, when they gradually died away. John Benton says that these spirits are ignorant or undeveloped; that their tendencies were either mischievous or deliberately evil, but that even in the course of the few years during which Riley had been holding his materializations, many of them have already progressed from their earlier condition of evil purpose to a higher grade of intelligence. This seems quite reasonable, though why the medium should have been so completely the object of their attack, does not seem clear. One would naturally suppose that they would enjoy the opportunity to work a little mischief, retaining sufficient wisdom or cunning not to molest the medium to whose powers they were indebted for this opportunity to manifest their power, because it is reasonably certain that to spirits of such an order, any display of power must be a fascinating possession. It is not clear, therefore, why they should have vented their spite upon the medium.

Mr. Clyde Goodrich, the druggist in Marcellus, upon being questioned regarding the phenomena of a malignant type which he had witnessed at the Riley home, said that he had seen so many manifestations, it was difficult to call one-tenth part of them to mind, as one had a tendency to run into another, but he recollected that at one seance in which the evil influences were present, a slate was thrown through the curtains, bearing

this message: "You people go home. You are working against God's laws." The message was signed "Rev. Father Hogg." Mr. Goodrich, acting as spokesman for the little band of investigators said, "We do not come here to work against the laws of God, we are here to prove if possible, the continuity of life beyond the grave. We do not wish your spirit to appear at our circles."

Mr. Goodrich informed me that he had attended seances at the Riley home during the appearance of the evil spirits when he had been afraid for Jim's safety. Speaking of other phenomena which he had witnessed under Jim Riley's mediumship, he said that on one occasion there were two men present in the circle who especially wished to see a dematerialization of the spirit form. John Benton was appealed to and he said he would see what he could do. The message was sent out later by means of the slate, that three raps would be the signal for the men to come forward and pull back the curtain. At the signal, the two men who were sitting in the front row, darted forward and pulled back the curtain, revealing the form of John Benton in full light. The form fell apparently backward and melted into nothing. The men dropped the curtain and had scarcely turned round to return to their seats, before John Benton's form, fully materialized, again appeared at the curtain.

But this is nothing to what Mr. Goodrich has seen from a continuous observation of these phenomena covering a period of several years. Once, for example, he heard the voice of John Benton saying, "If you think you can stand the light, go out there." After some waving of the curtain, John Benton drew it back, and two

forms fully formed were revealed in the light. One was John Benton, the other a new spirit unrecognized by the witness. The form of the medium was invisible, being on the other side of the door from the opening of the curtain; but the two spirit forms were in clear relief.

One of the most interesting things that has happened to Riley occurred during a severe sickness which visited him some years ago. He was under the care of Dr. Shillito, and his case, inflammatory rheumatism, with nervous exhaustion, had reached a point at which recovery seemed extremely doubtful. At this time, however, throughout the sickness, he was frequently entranced by his spirit guides, one of his "controls," Dr. Cottrell being especially to the front. When this trance condition came upon him, Jim would enter into conversation with his visitors and watchers, speaking in the personality of the guides, and his family were requested not to mourn, because "the medie" would assuredly come out all right and recover his full strength. At the same time, explicit directions were given by the control as to what was to be done for Jim, and which medicines left by the physician were to be administered and which were to be thrown away. When the critical period arrived, the control spoke through Jim as follows: "We have now entranced our medium for the last time in this sickness, and to show you how completely we have taken possession of him, we will prove to you that he has no feeling of pain in his inflamed feet."

Jim then proceeded to kick his bandaged feet against the bed post, and in another second he was out of bed and standing on his feet. Not content with this demon-

stration of their power, his guides next stood him upon his head upon the floor, and being apparently satisfied with their remarkable exhibition, suffered him to return to bed. Still speaking under control, Jim said, "Now you see that we have taken the Medie thoroughly in charge, and all that is required is now to let him sleep,—let him sleep, and see that no one is allowed to disturb him till he wakes of his own accord. When he wakes he will be well." Jim fell immediately into a deep sleep, from which he made a rapid recovery. It should be remembered in analyzing this occurrence, that just before he passed under control, even a jar from a passing foot-step near the bed caused him excruciating suffering, which will be no news to any one who has experienced inflammatory rheumatism.

CHAPTER XIII.

John Benton's Philosophy—Limitations of Spirit Power—Reincarnation—Skepticism—Doubts.

At a special seance held for the purpose of recording as nearly as might be John Benton's opinions upon several points of interest, the conditions secured at the dark seance, which usually precedes the materializations and which is looked upon as an index to what will appear at the after sitting, were very good, the manifestations being strong and frequent. During the materializing seance which followed, messages came in three ways; either by three raps for "yes," one rap for "no," or by writing on the slate, or as sometimes happened, by the deep voice of John Benton verbally imparting the information. (This chapter will be full of information to the investigator as well as to an avowed believer, from the fact that this information comes direct from Mr. Benton who has been in spirit life for sixty years, and is in a position to give accurate information along these lines.)

After the singing of "The Suwanee River," "Old Folks at Home," and "Nearer, My God, To Thee," raps came on the cabinet wall. The questions had all been written down beforehand, and were occasionally laid aside while the force gathered more strength through

the singing of a hymn by the circle. The questions and answers followed, the questions being aloud and the answers rapped, written or spoken from the cabinet. "Are you present, Mr. Benton?" "Yes." "Will you answer the list of questions for us?" "Yes, if possible." "Have you a perfect memory now of every incident of importance in your earth life?" "No; (on slate) but a better memory." "When Mr. Riley's mediumship is at an end, is your mission to earth life closed,—ended?" "Yes." "Have you in spirit life, a sense of heat and cold?" "No." "Have you a sense of sorrow and joy?" "Yes." "Are your emotions as keen as ours?" "No." "Do you know the oncoming of old age as we know it?" "No." "Can you experience the sex love of man and woman?" "Yes." "The question relates to the sex love as mortals know it. Is communion the same?" "Communion (by slate) and sex love, but not the same." "Have you united families in the spirit world?" "Yes, (slate) remember the law of attraction holds families together; if no love, no attraction." "Is there telepathy in the spirit world as a common gift, or is it something that must be learned gradually? Is it a gift to all?" "Yes." "It has not to be learned?" "No." "Do you prefer to commune with each other by speech or thought? Thought?" "Yes." "Is your own state happier than on earth?" "Yes." "Is your power of grasping happiness greater than on earth?" "Yes." "Do you know any more of your ultimate destiny now than when on earth?" "Yes." "Do you know that reincarnation is possible?" "Yes, (slate) but not probable." "If possible is the spirit selected for a rebirth without choice in the matter?" "Yes, (slate) I am

only an individual. I know not. It may be true. (Later) Speaking of reincarnation, I must explain. I meet many who say it is a fact, for they remember their previous re-imbodiment. Let me say I have seen suffering enough on the physical plane, and have no desire to return to it; I do not wish reincarnation to be true. (Later) My dear ones, I will be more explicit when I visit the wise ones again. I do not wish it (reincarnation) to be true but I will give it as they give it to me." "Have you sense of day and night?" "No." "Is your time fully occupied?" "Yes." "Can you be in two places at once?" "No." "Is it indeed summerland with you?" "Not all the time." "Do you know any more of Christ than you knew when on earth's plane?" "No." "Do you know any more of God?" "Yes, (slate) God is a principle." "Do you know anything more of the Apostles?" "Yes." "Which of the Apostles,—John?" "No, (by rappings) Barnabas." "Any others?" "Yes." "Is it the mission of the higher grades of spirits to assist other spirits, rather than to come back to assist mortals?" "Yes." "Then is it rather the mission of those who have but lately passed over to return and assist mortals?" "Yes."

"Is the time at hand when the veil between the two worlds shall be lifted, and men shall talk with angels?" "Not yet, (slate) you are on the borderland; you must cross the Plains first." "Is it true that the soul of living man can manifest itself in other material forms in the same way as your departed spirit has clothed itself in a material form tonight?" "Yes." "Is it possible for a human being by living such a life as the Adepts of India teach and practice to build a spiritual body in the

flesh and practically defy death, retaining the physical for hundreds of years without passing through the change which we call death? Is this possible?" (Slate) "Not while the conditions on your earth plane exist as at present." "Has the subconscious mind of man the power in itself of foretelling future happenings?" "No." "Let me put the question in another way. Is clairvoyance a spirit gift impressed upon the mind of a mortal by aid of departed spirits?" "Yes." "Then clairvoyance is not within the category of mental attainments?" (Slate) "No, there is spirit help." "Here is a long question, Mr. Benton. Suppose the following case: Two human beings, mother and daughter, are so closely united in affection that one seems to be an echo of the other. The mother lives apparently but for her daughter's happiness. Then one day the daughter dies, leaving the mother anxious, sorrowful, hungry for a word, a touch, a look from the departed one. There is nothing vouchsafed, not a whisper to relieve the suffering mother. The mother is an agnostic, hoping for continuity of life, but no assured belief in it. Does the heart of the spirit-daughter still vibrate with love for her mother?" "Most assuredly (slate) yes." "Cannot the daughter communicate with, or manifest herself to her mother without the aid of a medium?" "Yes, my dear sir, (slate) but the mother does not open the door of her soul for the daughter." "The fault then, is with the mother?" "Yes." "And if the mother changes her attitude, communications can be interchanged?" "Yes." "There is a theory afloat, Mr. Benton, that all these manifestations, materializations, etc., are the property of the subcon-

scious mind. Can you refute this?" "Yes." "Can you reason both inductively and deductively?" "Yes." "We may leave the arranging of some test bearing on this point till later on?" "Yes, we will see what we can do to explode that theory." "Can the departed spirit always see us?" "No." "Can they always read our thoughts?" "No." "That is all. Thank you. Good-night." After which Jim came out of his trance, concluding about one o'clock in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

Explanations—Theories—Spiritualist's Explanations— Conclusions.

I will now assume that the reader is here in my place and has witnessed what I have. The one thing that reflection has made you sure of, is that Jim's mediumship is genuine, and that he is innocent of deception in producing materializations. Now there remain two or three ways of accounting for the forms. The first explanation would be that while Jim is under control, while he is unconscious of what is transpiring, he assumes the dress and disguise of different characters, and impersonates the forms. This is what a skeptic would say. The writer says that it is easier for the spirit to control the medium to do these, than to perform them himself. But against this, it would be impossible to secrete these various disguises either about the person of the medium, or in the cabinet; and as this cabinet has always been my bedroom, I can assure the readers of this book that there is no part of it which has not been vigorously examined by me many times.

A skeptic's explanation of this impersonation would also include slate-writing which he would say might be done by the medium while controlled by the spirit of

John Benton. Granting that this is satisfactory to the skeptic, let us put ourselves for a moment in Jim Riley's place and see how we would then look at the matter. We go into the cabinet and unconsciousness comes upon us; we know no more until we are somehow aroused some twenty minutes later; we find ourselves in precisely the same position in which we were when we went under the influence,—that is to say, we are sitting with our head pressed against the door-sill. When we are fully awakened they, the circle, tell us many things have happened. Forms have appeared at the curtain, slates have been passed out, bearing messages from loved ones, etc., etc. Now if these phenomena have occurred and the circle is quite positive on that point, and if you have no recollection, you, the medium, of anything of the kind, are you not fully justified in assuming that you had nothing whatever to do with the production of the phenomena? And have you not a perfect right to feel indignant and even bitter if anyone questions your good faith and honesty? Surely you have, and this explanation will suffice for the slate-writing mediums and will suffice for the materializations of some mediums which are not materializations but impersonations, and yet which are none the less the work of some force, spiritual or physical, which dominates the medium while normal personality sleeps.

Right here, permit me to say that there never has been any impersonation in Jim Riley's mediumship. None whatever. The curtain has been thrown back while Jim is under control. Jim can be seen leaning his head against the door-sill, and when the curtain is thrown

back it makes the cabinet light, and you can see the spirit form go all to pieces. That is, what it is built up of, will dematerialize. I think you will agree with me that the impersonating theory will not do at Jim Riley's sittings.

But now let us look at the matter from another viewpoint. Suppose the phenomena are, as I now believe them to be, genuine. What explanation of the wig feature would be given by the Spiritualists, or Theosophists, if appealed to for an answer? I am not quite sure of the Theosophists, for their talk of astrals is very befogging; but a Spiritualist would say this: These forms that you see are not the spirit forms of the departed as they now exist in spirit life. They are the forms which are built up with the aid of John Benton, the cabinet guide, out of "the memories" of those who come to the seance as spectators, and out of the memories of the spirits who come to the circle. For instance, if a one-legged man dies and comes to the circle, the form that appears at the curtain has one leg, and if there be any one present that remembers this spirit in earth life, he will remember most especially the one-leg feature; but if there be none present who can recognize this spirit, he is none the less wise in coming with one leg, because in that form he stands the best chance of bringing himself to the recollection of some one in the circle at this time, or any future time. But his spirit form has two legs, and it is the earth condition that gives him the appearance of having only one; so each form that materializes gathers such features about it as will be most readily recognized by the circle.

The materials of which some of these forms are com-

posed give the form the appearance of having been almost thrown together. The hair does not look like real hair, the beard does not look like a real beard, the lace of the sleeves of a dress may be only the appearance of lace, and if the arm of such a form as this last is examined closely, it will be seen that the lace, instead of being separated from the body, as in earth life, is in very truth a part of the skin itself. The real spirits are invisible to us; the forms they take on are only coverings; rough, perhaps, to our eyes, but assumed for a purpose only, for the purpose of securing recognition. And in this matter, if the spirit has plenty of force at his command, if he is not too anxious, and is confident, the form will be clearer and better finished; the details will be more elaborate than when conditions are not good, and when the work is hurriedly done. All this, if taken in slowly and without any desire to belittle the possible significance of the phenomena, is quite reasonable.

Anyone who comes to Jim Riley's house and attends his sittings, together with what you see of him, and knowing Jim's word is as good as his bond, will go away firmly believing that Jim Riley is an honest medium and that his phenomena are genuine till the day they die. Later on I will add testimonials that he has received from people who have been here and have seen and conversed with their dear ones who have passed to the other life. Some of them so appreciate Jim's efforts in their behalf that they call him their Savior. Such is the case of a gentleman who received a communication from his sister that stopped him on his downward career and made a man of him. An account of this will be given in a following chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

A Small Seance—The Inspiration—Alcohol and its Effect—The Logical Result.

Last night we had a small family seance. Jim had run out of chewing tobacco. The lack of this made him restless during the day, and he was not in the best mental condition to sit at night. Strange, upon what insignificant a preparation hinge the most important results. Jim always has a chew of tobacco in his mouth when he goes into the cabinet. Sometimes a message is sent out on a slate that if "they" are to hold the medium under control, some one of the sitters must go into the cabinet and put a chew of tobacco into the medium's mouth. Sometimes in their officious friendliness, the chosen ministers are over zealous, arguing perhaps that the more tobacco, the better the phenomena, and Jim comes forth at the close of the seance with his cheeks bulging like a cherub's. However, the fact remains that if he is not comfortable when he goes into the cabinet, the trance condition will soon terminate.

There being so small a circle, we did not expect much in the way of phenomena, but an experiment was tried which may yet, on repetition, produce some very fine tests. This was to turn the light in the room completely out,

raising the blind to allow the moonlight to stream in, and throwing back the curtain of the cabinet, or bedroom, permitting the form of the medium to be seen in the dark outline sitting by the door, one-half of his body being visible. We sat thus for some little while, and Jim joined us in the singing of hymns. From where I sat, having a view of the medium's body, it seemed difficult, if not impossible, that he should have had a hand in touching a slate lying on the bed behind him. There were only two slates in the house, and these two were thrown upon the bed. While we were singing, there was unmistakable, sharp tapping of a pencil on the slate, and presently one of the slates struck the floor, as if it had been thrown down with some violence.

Not having the benefit of the evidence of my eye sight in this matter, I do not attach any importance to the phenomenon, and only mention it as perhaps foreshadowing some greater test which we may receive under similar conditions. Upon taking the slate to the light in the next room, no message was found upon it; only the marks here and there made by the tapping of the pencil. To get better results we then dropped the curtain and lighted the lamp, and shortly afterwards the form of John Benton appeared, bowed, and disappeared, followed by the figure of an old man of venerable aspect, with a very presentable, long, gray beard. He waved his hand towards the window, against the casing of which the cat of the house, expelled for her sins, was making a vigorous scratching. Again the figure waved solemnly. "Is it the cat?" asked Mrs. Riley. The form nodded his head. "Shall we let her in?" Again a nod. Mrs. Riley

got up, laughed, and let the animal in. Apparently satisfied, the form retired and disappeared. He was not recognized. Soon after this, Jim came out of his trance. After walking about a little while and talking of many subjects foreign to spiritualism, he let fall the remark that he was waiting for his "inspiration" before going "back in." An inquiry drew from him the explanation that this inspiration took the form first of a tingling all over him, then a sort of shiver, and then he heard "the voice within" saying "Now" or "Go." Always a brief command. Then he knew the time had arrived, and went into the cabinet.

Upon trying it again last night, a slate message was sent to Mrs. Riley from her cousin in spirit life, and after that, a long time, a slate was handed out to me bearing the signature "John Benton," and containing the message, "I do not advocate intemperance, but I think if our medie had a drink of whiskey and a chew of tobacco to steady his nerves, you will get the tests you are looking for. This brings to mind the matter of a conversation with Jim which I had a week ago upon the point. "Can you tell me," said Jim, "why it is, if for any reason it is important that I should get phenomena for a particular seance, that I am always sure the phenomena will be good, and every one tells me they are good, if I am given a drink of whiskey before I go into the cabinet? And I can be around alcohol, have it close to me for a month at a time, and never touch a drink—never want to touch a drink; but just as sure as I take a drink of whiskey,—now, mind, it's just facts I am giving you—and go into the cabinet, the phenomena are

stronger and better than ever. Now how is it no one can explain that?"

I suppose that the alcohol quickens the vibrations; couldn't see any other explanation than that; but it struck me as affording a significant explanation of why so many mediums during the later stages of their career show a leaning towards strong drink. It seems that the phenomena occasion a drain upon the nervous system, which an artificial stimulant offsets, and though Jim is not a drinking man, he feels the stimulating influence of a drink of whiskey just before his sittings. By this it must be supposed that he takes a drink before a seance as a matter of course. On the contrary, he is strictly temperate, from my observation of him; but there the fact remains; artificial stimulation produces higher vibration; less nervousness; more harmonious equilibrium; and following from that, more harmony, better phenomena. Of course, it does not take a very wise head to understand that if the pendulum swings well one way, it must swing well back the other; and that if these phenomena are produced under artificial stimulation the reaction must be correspondingly intense. But this matter is put before you as in some degree an explanation of why so many mediums of a promising beginning give themselves up before many years' experience before the public to intoxication. The story is very common, and the moral obvious. We should rather attribute the cause of their downfall to a naturally creditable desire to give the public the fullest satisfaction, than to gratification of a mere appetite and craving. We are ever too ready to blame.

CHAPTER XVI.

Old Accounts—Adverse Influence—Clyde Goodrich's Experience— Remarkable Seance.

The writer has been acquainted with Mr. Goodrich for the past twenty years. He is an estimable gentleman, an ardent Spiritualist, and one who will not countenance fraud of any kind. He is in the drug business in Marcellus, and has known Jim all his life. He furnished a few clippings from newspapers relating to his observation of Riley's phenomena many years ago. It was at that time, Jim's custom to sit with flour in his hands when under control, in order to show the sitters that should he do these things the flour would spill on the floor. This was some eighteen years ago; this is not required of him now as his mediumship is not questioned.

Here is an account furnished by Mrs. O. F. Smith of Vicksburg, Mich., to the "Progressive Thinker" under date of July 9, 1892. To the Editor :

"A circumstance occurred a few days ago which I would like to relate to the readers of your valuable paper. Friends of mine from La Grange, Ind., went to Marcellus, Mich., to attend a seance with Mr. James Riley, the materializing medium. Two of the friends were Spiritualists, and one was an honest investigator.

They had engaged the evening some time previous to their departure from home. So on their arrival at Mr. Riley's home, they found him ready for the seance, and all were about ready to enter the seance room when a stranger came and asked admittance to the seance. Mr. Riley told him he could not permit him to enter, as the other gentlemen had the evening by previous engagement; but he insisted, and said he had come some distance on purpose to attend the seance, and would be disappointed if he could not do so. The gentlemen then said they would not object if all could sit in harmony, and he was admitted."

"Mr. Riley then entered the cabinet, but no manifestations were received. The medium then came out of the cabinet, sat and talked a while, then went back again; but there were no manifestations. Finally a slate was handed out on which was written, 'Conditions are such that we cannot do anything tonight.' The three men paid Mr. Riley for his time, assuring him that they would come again. At ten o'clock they took the hack for the station, the stranger going with them. On the way to the station, they were discussing the seance and talking about going again, when the stranger said, 'I do not believe one word of his stuff. He is a humbug and a fraud, and I went there to break him up, and should have done it if he had tried any of his games on me. I am a Catholic, and came for the purpose of breaking him up. His people, the Spiritualists, are our worst enemies, and we are after them. We will do all we can to destroy them, and we can do it, too.'"

"It seems that his words are true in more cases than

one, for the poor mediums are suffering from their subtle influence. To know their threats and determination may put some mediums on their guard against such influences. I can see no reason why we should be discouraged, for we have truth and the heavenly host to sustain us."

(Signed,) "Mrs. C. F. Smith."

Here is, indeed, a strange occurrence to reflect upon; namely, that the adverse thought of one sitter was sufficiently strong to prevent the manifestations earnestly desired by at least three other persons in the circle. And what were the heavenly hosts about that they could not prevent this adverse influence from disturbing their medie? But it is reasonable to conclude that the explanation is rather to be found in the fact, that for some reason, perhaps unknown to himself, Jim Riley was not in the mood to permit a manifestation through his mediumship, to us. We have the temerity to smile at the bigotry of the various creeds, whether Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, or anything else; it seems a little absurd that Spiritualists should ever have felt it necessary to arm themselves against the destroying influences projected against them by the following of the sectarian pulpits. However, we should do wisely to remember that, according to John Benton's philosophy of the hereafter, Catholics are Catholics, and for some reason which chimes with their faith, are as averse to these spiritualistic seances, as their brethren on earth. He alone, is free, I think, who bows the knee to no sect or creed, worshipping God in his heart.

Mr. Goodrich handed me also, the following account

of one or two of his first experiences at the Riley home, which he sent to the "Progressive Thinker," and which was printed July 9, 1892. The account is as follows:

"Many communications have appeared in the "Progressive Thinker" and from time to time in the daily newspapers all over the country, giving accounts of seances held with J. W. Riley of Marcellus, Mich., but those published by the secular press are largely overdrawn and inaccurate in most cases. We submit the following accurate account of some personal experiences. It was in November of last year that the writer, in company with five of the business men of this village, made the first visit. We had heard many stories of his powers, but like other skeptics did not believe that the manifestations actually occurred as they were told to us, although informed by persons whose word we had no reason to doubt."

"We arranged for a sitting and drove out to his home at the time set. The evening was a very rainy one, but our zeal to investigate the mysterious was enough to overcome such difficulties. The seance, owing to the fact that it was a mixed circle and was composed of six individuals of different families, and was their first experience in such matters, was not as successful as those of later visits. But we saw enough to convince us that there was no trickery practiced, and to make us wish to see more. Several full forms were materialized, and most of them were recognized."

"The medium usually sits in a small bedroom, which is made very dark. The room the members of the circle sit in, is lighted with a lamp turned down, but giving

light enough at all times to see the time by the watch in any part of the room, and to read the slate-written messages if carried to the lamp. These seances are given under strict test conditions. At one seance the control, John Benton, wrote on a slate, saying that when he appeared at the curtains, to have two members of the circle who were sitting in front to get to the curtains as quickly as possible and hold them open. It is needless to say that no time was lost in doing so. When the curtains were parted, the materialized form was seen to go backward in a different direction than that of the medium and fade away, while the medium was seen to be sitting in his chair with his face in his hands. The control then wrote that he believed that this had never before been attempted through any medium."

"One of the best seances it has been our fortune to attend was held on June 9th. There were present Dr. C. B. Spinney, of Detroit, Mr. A. Vlerebome (your humble servant), another gentleman, W. S. Strong, and a party of seven from Marcellus. Almost immediately after the medium had taken his position, the curtains parted and the tall form of Mr. Benton stepped out of the cabinet with a bunch of roses, and handed each lady in the circle a rose. A bunch of roses had been previously laid on the bed in the cabinet by one of the ladies. (The writer well remembers that one of the ladies remarked that Mr. Benton would get his hands full of thorns.) Many slate-written messages were received and forms recognized. The light was turned up so as to make the room very light on three different forms who stood for a moment and then went back, the light being so strong they could not stay long."

“The sensation of the evening came when a slate was handed out to Mrs. Riley who read the message; ‘Ladies and Gentlemen, I am requested to make my appearance to greet you all with good cheer.’ “George Washington.” Immediately the curtains parted and the well-known towering form of Washington stood before us,—the buckles on his shoes, the knee breeches, the wig upon his head, etc. He was attired in full Continental suit. He disappeared and every one exclaimed, ‘How beautiful! Please come again.’ The second time he built up from the floor; the first we saw was his head on the floor; he slowly arose until he filled the little doorway, six feet. He then disappeared, and the slate was handed out, bearing the message, ‘I am pleased to meet you. I must return.’ “George Washington.”

“The seance was a splendid one in every respect and shows that under proper conditions, wonderful manifestations will occur. This article is not written as an advertisement of Mr. Riley, as he is not a professional medium and does not need the advertising. He is at all times willing to aid the earnest seeker for light, and through his powers has given consolation to many who could not rely on ‘faith’ as an evidence of future life and existence, and he has caused joy in the hearts of others who thought they had the faith but admitted that direct evidence was better than to rely upon any book for their information.”

(Signed.) “C. G. Marcellus, Mich.”

Right here I will add that I was present at this sitting as you have noticed. W. S. Strong and I came down

from Grand Rapids. Mr. Strong's brother materialized at this sitting. After the sitting we took a night train to Schoolcraft, Mich., went to a hotel and to bed in order to catch a Lake Shore train in the morning to Grand Rapids. We went to bed; raps came on the head of our bed; I said to Mr. Strong, "Who is that?" He replied, "My brother," and he held quite a conversation with him. I had invited Mr. Strong to go to this sitting, knowing that he had never seen anything like it. Strong remarked, "Vlerebome, they haven't that kind of suits up here in the woods of Michigan." In a later chapter I will give the account of a sitting with Riley on May 3, 1909. Mr. Strong passed over some eight years ago. At this sitting he materialized for me.

CHAPTER XVII.

Approach of an Adept—The Old Man—Abraham Lincoln—Materials for Materializing.

The conviction is settling upon my soul that the test I seek, will not or cannot be accorded. Last night we had another seance at which Mr. and Mrs. Rimes, Miss Dollie and the family composed the circle. Jim gave me the best seat, and my hopes ran high, that at last I should receive tangible proof of the fading out properties of these materialized forms. The seance opened as usual with sacred song. Presently a slate came out for Mrs. Riley. The message was, "Do not ask for any one. Leave us to do our work our own way. We are trying to quicken the vibrations of the medium." Another slate, this time for me from John Benton. "Dear Brother, do not be discouraged. We are trying to give you a test never given before to one on your plane." Soon afterwards Jim "came out" and the circle rested. He seemed very nervous, much more so than usual. "There is some influence here, tonight," he said, "which is strange to me. It seems far off, far away, I can't make it out." He muttered something to himself and I caught the words "exalted," "carried away." After a rest of fifteen minutes, he resumed his seat in the cabinet. We were all perhaps, rather keyed up with

anticipation. Shortly, another slate: "We have with us tonight, a stranger from the Far East, an Adept, who lived on earth ten thousand years ago. We shall try to show him to you."

"John Benton."

Good news, indeed. We sang many hymns; one or two forms appeared, but none were strong enough to give any test. Presently, Jim "came out" again to our disappointment. "They don't seem to be able to hold you tonight, pa," said Miss Dollie. Agreed to, but inexplicable. This seems to be just as incomprehensible to Jim as to the rest of the circle. He says, "You had better try singing something quicker,—get quicker vibrations. I feel somehow that the old hymn won't do for tonight. I feel differently, as if a quicker vibration was wanted." Again he "went under Control"; and again a long wait. No manifestations. The curtain waved and continued waving throughout "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching."

An old man, whose features, because of his frequent appearance at these seances, are becoming deeply impressed upon my mind, came out, paused as if he had forgotten something, and went back. Somehow, I begin to feel attracted to this old gentleman. No one ever recognizes him, but he comes with the regularity of the yearly almanac, slightly bent, making no sign to the circle. He, with difficulty, holds back the curtain for a moment, with his eyes bent on the ground, lets himself be seen, and then, apparently satisfied, drops out of sight and takes his place, presumably in the concourse of spirits. If he comes again tonight, we will try to get his name from John Benton.

Every other form looks the circle squarely in the face, but this old man never looks up. Ha! we are perhaps on the heels of a spirit tragedy! Again Jim "comes out." An adjournment is made for supper. It is time that something was done; the circle is badly demoralized and hopes have sunk to zero. Refreshed by supper and a cheerful talk, we again assemble and take up the burden of "Marching thro' Georgia," "Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight?" "Beulah Land," and other airs. "John Brown's Body" is sung with spirit. A long wait. During the last three or four seances "the forces" have begun to "draw" upon me strongly. There's a "pricking in my limbs," my arms are painful, the invisibles are running needles into my knees, and an electric breeze disturbs the roots of my hair. Minnie, the baby of the house, is still one of the circle. Blessed child! She sheds a cooling and gentle influence about her. Her eyes are heavy with sleep; it is now close to one o'clock in the morning. Jim coughs again, and the curtains are thrown back. He does not come out of his chair, however, and asks how the materializations are. "Nothing materialized yet," says Mrs. Riley, "to speak of. We don't know what the trouble is." "Try it again, now," says Jim, and we sing once more.

Two members of the family went to bed before supper. The last boy, Fred, now says goodnight, and goes upstairs. The remnant of the old guard settles back once more in their chairs. Mrs. Riley gets no further than the first verse of "Summerland." She is asleep. Peace to her! good woman, wearied with the day's work and the cooking for many mouths. Another long wait. The

singing, supported by Mrs. Rimes, Miss Dollie, and Minnie. A slate for me, which I take into the next room to read. "The medium is unable to remain any longer under control. We will try again this evening."

"A. Lincoln."

As I re-enter the room, the circle is fully aroused. There is a form at the curtain. It points toward a picture on the wall, the picture of Abraham Lincoln to which the form bears a striking resemblance. "That's who it is," says Mrs. Riley, "sure he's pointing at his picture." The figure bows and disappears. Immediately the medium is out of his trance, the curtain thrown back, and the light turned up. Jim is very shaky and nervous, "trembly" he calls it. He thinks they were trying to make conditions for the next seance, but confesses that a seance of this kind is just as hard on him, if not worse, than one in which the phenomena are as thick as bees. He has been sitting tonight in his own bedroom for a cabinet and one of the last messages on the slate bore the advice to the circle to try the other room next time.

Jim sits up to smoke a pipe before going to bed and delivers himself of an important utterance. "Martha," he says, "won't be bothered with anything of the kind, but if we tried we ought to be able to find out what it is they want to materialize with. Once they told me that a pan of fresh earth in the room would help, and they said something about sulphur being good to help conditions. We never sit without a jug of water in the cabinet if we remember it, but there was no water in the room tonight. I suppose we ought look after those things and help them all we can by giving them what they can use to build up with."

CHAPTER XVIII.

No Test—The Music Box—Doctor Jones—Consolation—Mischief
—Queer Phenomena—Spirit Incredulity—Deductions.

At last night's sitting we had a view of the medium sitting in his chair while the spirit form held aside the curtain. Mrs. Riley and Mr. Rimes were also witnesses to this fact. The company cannot, of course, enter into my wish to have tests of all the phenomena to verify the materialization of a spirit form by sense of touch. To them as seen is a fact, and they do not trouble themselves with the opinions of those who are outside the circle, and who have not seen. It was about one o'clock in the morning when, after many forms had appeared and some remarkable phenomena witnessed, Mrs. Riley said, "Is Dr. Cottrell there?" Three raps. "Can Mr. Flower go up to the curtain, Dr. Cottrell, and can you show him the figure of the medium sitting in his chair?" The answer was written on a slate. It was, "Not to-night, lady."

One phenomena was very curious. There is a large music-box in the cabinet which, in the days when these manifestations were very powerful and varied, used to play an important part in them, being frequently picked up by the forms and offered to members of the circle.

It is no slight muscular feat to pick up this music-box and place it gently in the hands of some one sitting in a chair, and all this without the sound of a footstep or a quickened breathing. This was accomplished last night. A tall form which was at once recognized as John Benton came out of the cabinet bearing the music-box in his hands. I (the writer) got up and took the music-box. In fact, I was afraid he would go all to pieces—dematerialize—before I took it out of his hands; for the music-box is a very large and heavy one. Mr. Benton bowed to the sitters and returned to the cabinet. Slate was handed out with this message: "There will be no more manifestations tonight; the medium is exhausted."

"John Benton."

Speaking again with Jim concerning the use of a pan of earth in assisting the forms to materialize, he said that they had tried it once but after the seance the earth was found scattered all over the floor and Martha had strongly objected. "They don't seem to care much what they do," Jim said. "You'd suppose they'd fall in with our wishes and try to please us all they could, but they don't; you never know." And this brings us to another phase of spirit phenomena; one which is not less interesting than anything that has been already recorded, but which betrays a disposition closely allied to the mischievous. When Minnie, the youngest child, was a baby in arms, the spirits, manifesting their presence at that time chiefly by raps, took a great interest in her, frequently assuring Jim that his mediumship at a later day would descend to her. They showed their interest sometimes in a peculiar manner. During the afternoons when

Mr. and Mrs. Riley left the house, leaving Minnie asleep on the bed, they twice found on their return that the door of the bedroom in which the child lay had been fastened on the inside by pushing the thumb-latch above the lock, thus preventing the handle from being turned. There was no way by which any one could enter the room and perform this act.

In order to get to the child it was now necessary to take the door down. On the same night, Mrs. Riley received a communication from Ezra (her dead brother) to the effect that they had locked the baby in the room just to show that they were about. This was considered a pretty good joke, and voted to be "just like Ezra, plaguing somebody." But when the same thing happened the next day, it ceased to be amusing. It is scarcely funny to take a door off its hinges every time you want to get into a certain room. The thing was remarkable enough, however, to warrant sending for the locksmith, and the lock was examined to see if by chance the slamming of the door would cause the bolt to fall, thus possibly accounting for the occurrence. But it was proved conclusively that no amount of slamming would stir the bolt, or prevent the door from being opened as usual by the handle. That night Ezra was firmly rebuked and bluntly informed that if any tricks of that kind were resorted to again there would be no more sittings, whereupon Ezra, being contrite, promised that he would not so offend again.

Later, Jim sat in the same room in daylight with a circle, all holding hands, to see if the phenomena could be repeated. They took the precaution of placing Min-

nie on the bed before trying the experiment. Sure enough, the thumb latch was found to have been shot when one of the circle arose to investigate. "I can't understand," said Jim, in speaking of this, "why they should seem to take pleasure in doing things like this, and then suddenly quit, and maybe for a year or more do nothing of this kind at all." Some other inexplicable phenomena of this kind have occurred in the house, such as, the unlocking of the front door, turning the handle and throwing the door wide open, on one occasion scaring a sitter so badly that he departed in haste for Marcellus. This particular investigator had been in the house for several days, having a nightly sitting, his idea being to reconcile the phenomena he witnessed with his understanding of natural law. But the phenomena dazed him, and when ghostly hands in full light unlocked a door which he had just seen locked, and in which there was a pane of glass permitting any object on both sides to be easily discerned, and when that door was flung wide open, he gave it up.

The limitations of this power are just as strange to me as its manifestations. For instance, which of us would boast of his power to rock a chair. One night, when Jim and his wife had gone to bed in the room off the parlor, lying to the east side of the house (the door which from the head of the bed gave a view into the parlor itself), rappings on the head of the bed announced that the forces desired to manifest. Jim was weary and told them to go away and let him sleep; but Mrs. Riley has always a desire to welcome them whenever they come, and she spelled out the raps. They said,

"We can rock the armchair." The armchair stood near the window in the parlor, and in the moonlight was distinctly visible. She said, "If you can, let's see you do it." They rapped, "Sing." So Jim was constrained to sit up in bed and take an interest in the proceedings, and, under the influence of song, the rocker began to vibrate and move, and presently rocked away merrily all by itself, no force being visible.

It has often been asserted by John Benton that spirit is always invisible; that it is utterly impossible for the human eye in the normal exercise of its function to behold a spirit. Even a clairvoyant, seeing with the abnormal vision which is vouchsafed to some, sees only the forms in which the spirits are clothed. The essence of his being is as much a mystery to the spirit decarnate, as to the spirit incarnate, and this is a good thing to remember. And there is another point of great importance to bear in mind. We who have absorbed a belief in the continuity of the individual life beyond the grave, scarcely question the belief in immortality, assuming as we do that immortality is a fact, but one which is impossible of demonstration. Some look with jaundiced eye upon the phenomena of Spiritualism because in the recesses of their minds there is an aversion to anything that savors of prying into these mysteries, this prying seeming to imply questioning and appearing to mean a want of reverence for that which should be sacred. Those men, having these beliefs with regard to immortality are none the less very skeptical regarding the fact of the return of spirits of the departed to the earth by materialization, through the instrumentality of

"a medium." We resent the idea as unpleasant and refuse to consider it.

Rapid strides have been made during the past twenty years to my certain knowledge in the direction of communicating with those in spirit life. The spirits seem to me are more anxious to communicate with the people on earth than the people on earth are to communicate with them. Thousands, yes millions of the inhabitants of this world are sitting for development that they may be able to communicate with the dear ones who have passed over. Every person on earth has the mediumistic qualities within them to a higher or lower degree. Some are born mediums

CHAPTER XIX.

My First Sitting With Jim Twenty Years Ago When I was an Investigator—Great Results—Mrs. Riley Passes to the Other Life—Communicates With Martha—Jim Travels—Marries Again—Her Mediumistic Powers—Poem Dedicated to Daisy—Poem to Jim From His Mother in Spirit Life.

Twenty years ago, when I was investigating the subject of Spiritualism, was traveling then as I am now, I was at Reading, Michigan, one day and was waiting for my train and happened to pick up the Detroit Free Press and read an account of a seance given by Farmer Riley near Marcellus, Michigan. I decided when the opportunity presented itself I would go and see what I could learn through him. Two weeks later I was at Vicksburg, Michigan, only sixteen miles from Marcellus; I got aboard a freight train going to Marcellus and in the caboose were two traveling men. I engaged in conversation with them and informed them I was going to Marcellus to see the wonderful medium, Farmer Riley; they said they would like to join me. I replied that I certainly would be pleased to have them go with me. One of them named Edward Forsyth who traveled for Park-Davis and Co., of Detroit, remarked that he had buried his grandfather at Toronto the Saturday before, and asked me if I thought he would see him. I replied that

I did not know as I had never been at Mr. Riley's sitting.

We arrived at Marcellus in due time, hired a team and drove out to Riley's, three and one-half miles, asked permission to be present at the sitting that evening, and were given it by Jim. The third form that appeared at the curtain was an old man; Mr. Forsyth jumped up excitedly and said, "That's my grandfather, and if you will come to my house in Kalamazoo, I will show you his photograph." Presently the slate was handed out, and it bore a message to "Edward" and was signed by his grandfather. We had given no names. The next form was for me. He came out of the cabinet with hand extended; I jumped up and met him half way and took hold of his hand. I knew him the moment he appeared. I said, "Bless my life, it's LeRoy." He bowed and dematerialized before my eyes. LeRoy Scranton was his name, and I taught him telegraphy twenty years previous in Illinois, and secured him a position. He thought a great deal of me; he had passed over ten years previous at Peoria, Illinois, where he had been employed in the train despatcher's office. He looked as natural as life, even wearing a Prince Albert coat, as was his wont.

One year later I got off the train at Three Rivers, Michigan, and whom should I meet, but Edward Forsyth. I shook hands with him, asking what he thought of Spiritualism by this time. (I had made no decision as yet, so great a skeptic was I.) He replied, "I am stronger in the faith than ever." I asked him why. He replied, "You remember when you and I were at Riley's

a year ago? I wrote to my father in Port Huron, telling him what I had seen at Riley's. He wrote to my sister in Kalamazoo wanting to know if I was not crazy, as I had just got off a bed of sickness. My sister wrote my father that I was perfectly sane."

"Three weeks ago my sister Edith went to Toronto to visit friends there. One evening about five o'clock, my father had been milking the cows and had started to the house with the pails of milk in his hands. He saw Edith on the porch and she turned and went into the house. When he entered the house he remarked to my mother, 'Edith is home.' My mother replied that she was not. Then father said, 'Why, I saw her on the porch and she turned and went into the house.' Mother replied, 'Well, she is not here.' Father imagined that there was something wrong in Toronto and said, 'We will go to Toronto to-night. Get ready.' But before they left the house, they received a telegram from the friends in Toronto informing them that Edith had suddenly died of diphtheria at five o'clock that evening." (Naturally when Edith left the body she went home and, fortunately, Mr. Forsyth saw clairvoyantly.) "They buried Edith. Then my father thought of what I had seen at Riley's a year previous. He went to Marcellus; he saw Edith, his father and his sister; he talked to his father and sister and came home a Spiritualist." Seeing is believing when a person can get such positive evidence as that.

In all the sittings I have had with Jim in the past twenty years, LeRoy Scranton has not materialized again.

Mrs. Riley passed to spirit life April 19th, 1903. She had been a faithful companion to Jim and all those years took the best of care of him, never wearying as night after night they would be up late into the morning at the sittings. She always had a cup of tea and a lunch for Jim when he came out of the cabinet. Jim felt her loss deeply. When Mr. Fred King, the undertaker, had completed the necessary arrangement of the body for burial, Mr. Riley felt that he would like to hear from "Martha" (Mrs. Riley). Mr. King and Mr. Riley went into the room where Mrs. Riley's body lay, taking with them two slates. They placed them on a stand and put their hands on them. The writing came between the slates. She said she was happy and pleased at the arrangements made for her funeral. She placed her hands on Jim's and Mr. King's heads. Mr. King said he heard a noise like some one walking about the room and a sound as of the rustling of a dress and a beautiful spirit light appeared.

Mr. Riley left the place in charge of his son Bert who was married. His two daughters, Irma and Minnie, who were still single, lived with Bert and Mr. Riley commenced traveling and giving sittings in different parts of the United States. But there was no place like home for Jim and on March 25th, 1905, he married Clara Rozilla March in Detroit, Michigan, and settled down home again. The second Mrs. Riley is quite a medium and is controlled by an Indian girl named Daisy. At Jim's dark circles she is always on hand and plays many pranks, such as decorating the heads of the sitters with feathers and exchanging the combs

of the ladies, playing the tambourine and guitar and patting the cheeks of the sitters. Beautiful spirit lights are produced at these sittings and are very entertaining.

Jim has a pony called Billy and many times when he is down in the pasture and they want him Daisy will say to Mrs. Riley, "I will bring Billy and will have him here in five minutes." And sure enough Billy comes to the house within the time specified. Many instances have been recorded of a horse stopping in the middle of the road when spirits have presented themselves. All animals can see clairvoyantly.

The following is a poem written by Pearl Gates, of Kalamazoo, to "Daisy":

Daisy.

One day we started a visit to make,
And to reach the place the train we must take.
When we arrived at a small country town,
It was near the hour that the sun goes down.

We secured a team of the highest grade,
And were soon on our way over hill and glade.
We viewed the scene with perfect delight,
For it was indeed a beautiful sight.

We traveled four miles from the little town
To the home of one of world-wide renown.
A modest home, but adorned with gems
Richer by far than the king's diadems.

These jewels are precious, useful and rare,
Named Farmer Riley and his good wife, Clare.
Another brightness that there will be found,
Is dear little Daisy with cheeks plump and round.

Daisy is sweet as the flower of her name,
Will always be found in manner the same,
To please everyone is her chief delight,
And e'en in the darkness can make a bright light.

With her small hands many things she can do,
That a wise magician cannot see through.
We think dear Daisy a marvel indeed,
And to her advice will gladly heed.

If she should suggest a wise plan for me
I should follow closely her full decree,
Feeling that she with her beauty and charm,
Would ne'er come in contact with thoughts that would
harm.

I am truly glad that we ever met,
Her sweet, winning ways I shall not forget,
And I hope some day to meet her again,
For I love her now and shall love her again.

The following is a poem from Mr. Riley's mother
through the mediumship of Mrs. L. H. Palmer, Hills-
dale, Michigan:

For Mr. James Riley.

“My son, my boy, as the years roll on,
And I see the good that you have done
In giving your forces that others may know
Of the life to come where the soul may grow
In beauty and grace and loveliness too,
And each one know if the other is true.”
“How strange the life you are living below,
So mixed with Hell and Heaven, I know,
Oh, I fain would scatter your path with flowers,
Taking out the weeks, leaving golden hours,
Hours of peace and love combined,
And rest for the soul and rest for the mind.”
“But the rest and peace of souls that are true,
To the noble work God gives them to do,
Will come at last, and your soul set free,
Will rise to the bliss of eternity.”
“God speed the time when my boy shall come,
And I can bid him ‘Welcome home.’
To a home of love so pure and true,
And angels are waiting to welcome you.”
“To thank you, my child, for helping them,
Though you receive the scorn of men.
The time will come, too soon, I fear,
When listening ears the trump shall hear.”
“Oh, happy thought, a life well spent,
A soul returns, ’tis only lent.
Returns to its home with work well done,
To hear a voice say, ‘Welcome home.’”

CHAPTER XX.

An Ancient Control—Interpretation of the Writing by Cora L. V. Richmond's Control, and by Mrs. Isa Wilson Kaynor.

Mrs. Riley has another phase, that of automatic writing. She is controlled by an ancient named Rajah Rameses. He is writing ancient history of his country and religion; is a scribe and an artist. The writing is similar to shorthand, very neat and regular. Mrs. Riley sent the first portion of the writing to Mrs. Cora Richmond to have her control, who is an ancient, interpret it.

Interpretation of Rajah's Writing.

By Cora L. V. Richmond's Control.

"In the ages that are agone, I dwelt in the cave palace by the sea. I was of the race that lived across from the deeps of the waters. I was one of the souls that raised from the sea of the day, calling unto our Ra for my guidance; one of the many who pass here, and ever repass, coming out of the nightly light and entering the shadows. It means that now the former things are restored, ancient light and new light meet and mingle and are one. Would that I could make you, little daughter, fleet of foot with wings for strength to bear you up and ever upward. Or, if I might give you a

vision of the light that giveth power, but yours is power of spirit working in silent chambers reaching many in the ways that nature's rolé has given, and because thou art a lowly spirit in thy earth dwelling, thou hast treasures like those shining gems I gathered from the waters. Thy jewels are of spirit and thou givest them the sitting of sweet, pure thoughts, so I come, my little one, to thee. If the lotus were abloom I'd give thee of its power. But the blossom of the kingdom is thy own life and labor. One day I will weave for thee a story, sweet and tender, of my palace by the sea caves, and how I came there. How I watched the god of day arising from the waters, who my people were and how I loved and suffered. An ancient, wondrous story, full of sorrows and of beauty. Sometime I will give it thee and make a thrilling story. Wait a while, dear heart, and then I will come to thee perhaps, in the strange guise for another to interpret."

"I will weave a magic story of my life in your dark earth land, dark to me now in this home of living light and spirit. And you will find much good to you, my little maiden, and to your people, when I come to tell my story. Some time will pass—some splendors and more cycles before I take your hand to tell you this, my story. But do not disregard these symbols, quaint and olden, nor the faces that gleam out like the spirit through the body. I am one of those who wore the body as a garment, to cast it off when the lessons had been given. I am sent unto you with a word of sunshine and shadows to draw your spirit to a sphere of more usefulness to others. Since I know your heart

goes out to give whatever is given, I will pause and come again and tell my story further."

Here is another interpretation by Mrs. Isa Wilson Kaynor, Chicago, Ill.:

"I, Rajah, scribe to Rameses, and keeper of the keys, have found in this medium, whom I have watched over from birth that I can use to give unto the world the history of my people and country and religious forms. We wish also the power to free her from trials of life for she is faithful to her work and has been tried and purified by discipline of life and have ever striven to help her. We are five of the band for drawing the scenes of my country. So our medium, you of the lily race, or willing hand, go on, be not afraid, for in you we live on earth again, and through you will bring to light a portion of the history of the lost continent and city Rasodigne (city of the Sun). Send out thy soul thought for the light and we will always respond. The dark days of this life are finished with thee, and all is well."

(Signed) Rajah.

Mrs. Kaynor says, "The Egyptian spirits who are with you are trying or rather giving through you some of the interim of their temples, also of the lectures at the time they lived, all being done on stone five hundred years before Christ. You have grand workers, all being of the temple of Liberia, museum of ancient workers. The picture you enclosed is only one small part of a whole; it is a portion of an Alpto Rabincis, and your quiet Rajah is an artist as well as a scribe, and you ought to get a book and let them write a little, not too

much, every day, as by the charts, I see they wish to give a history of their country, times, and religion, and if one piece is lost, it is hard to duplicate."

Mrs. Isa Wilson Kaynor,
8736 Wood St., Chicago, Ill.

Mrs. Riley's hand is controlled and automatically writes, as heretofore, writing similar to shorthand. There are one hundred and sixteen sheets of this writing, the size of foolscap paper, and quite a number of drawings which look quite ancient.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Very Interesting Seance—Remarkable Tests Given to Mr. Colvin—His Experience—Message From His Mother-in-Law and Wife—Message From Doctor Powell.

At a sitting given August 10th, 1909, Jim entered the cabinet and asked Mr. Sill, a resident of Marcellus, to come and hold his hand a moment. Mr. Sill is of a nervous temperament and dislikes being close to those who materialize. He asked the writer to drop the curtain and arrange the folds so as to exclude all light; Mr. Sill knows that before he gets away from arranging the curtain, a form will be instantly close to him, and this his nerves won't stand. (This alone should satisfy the worst skeptics that Jim could not in five seconds fix himself up to look like someone else besides himself.) Mr. Sill took Jim's hand for one minute, I dropped the curtain, arranged the folds at the bottom of the curtains, which consumed time not to exceed five seconds, and when I arose there stood a fine looking old gentleman. I was between the sitters and the form.

The old gentleman put his hand on my head, as much as to say, "Step aside so they can see me," which I did. Mr. Colvin of Buffalo says, "That is my uncle." The uncle acknowledged it, the light was turned up stronger

than usual. Within two minutes another form appeared and Mr. and Mrs. Sill spoke to him, as they knew him well. Will Webster was his name. He bowed to them. (On August 4th, 1909, Mrs. Webster was sitting at Jim's with Mr. and Mrs. Sill. Will Webster materialized that evening.) Within three minutes another form appeared, a very large man who came out of the cabinet and gave the Masonic signs. The writer, Mr. Colvin, and Mr. Sill, being Masons, of course understood the signs. He appeared for Mr. Colvin, but he, (Mr. Colvin) could not at that time think who he was. He was very much excited, for he had never witnessed anything of the kind before.

It is remarkable how quick and strong they materialize, when we stop to think how many years Jim has been giving sittings, and considering Jim's age; but he is as active and lively as I knew him to be twenty years ago. Mr. Benton brought Jim out of the influence, and after a rest of ten minutes, he re-entered the cabinet and we had a slate writing. A slate was handed out which contained a message for Mr. Colvin from his mother-in-law. It read, "Dear Fred, help me to come." There was some scribbling, not intelligible. We supposed she lost the power to write any more. This same slate was put back into the cabinet, her writing being left on the slate. After five minutes, this same slate was handed out and it contained a message from Mr. Colvin's wife. As there was not room enough on the slate for her to write her message, she had erased the writing which was left on, and wrote, "I erased mother's writing so as to have room. Oh, dear Fred, how happy this makes

me to be able to come and tell you I am not dead but live in a beautiful world of love. I am also glad you have taken a companion to journey through your earth life. I will be with you and help you, for you have met many disappointments."

Minnie.

Words could not express Mr. Colvin's joy at being able to communicate with his wife who had passed over. What a consolation to know that she lives! Mr. Colvin took the slate home with him. He emphatically stated that it was his wife's handwriting, and he certainly ought to know. Several other forms materialized and then this message was written on the slate for the writer. "Mr. Benton and Dr. Powell do not want the medium to give any more public sittings, in order to give the medium strength to give some home sittings, for we are going to get some important messages for the book we are now writing." Another message on the slate for the writer, read as follows: "Brother, we are pleased with our work so far; we want you to arrange so you and the medium can be alone. Please have the message the lady gave (the one to Mr. Colvin) in the book, for we exerted much force for her. Now brother, we will bid you good night."

Dr. Powell.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Writer's Visit With Jim, May 1st, 1909—The Sitting That Evening—How the Book Came to be Written—Message from Mr. Benton—My First Introduction to Dr. Powell—His Message—Gasoline Traction Engine Built Under the Direction of a Spirit.

On May 1st, 1909, my business was at Vicksburg, Schoolcraft, and Marcellus. The day was stormy; it snowed and blowed during the day, and was cold, was, in fact, a blizzard. I reached Marcellus 6:30 P. M., and had the liveryman drive me out to Jim's, having first telephoned him I was on the way. The year previous I had visited Jim and found him confined to his bed with rheumatism, but thanks to the spirit doctor, he was cured of that ill. An account of it was given in a previous chapter. We started for Jim's house. The wind was in our faces and it was strong and snowing hard. The snow was banked up on my lap and I was almost frozen when I reached Jim's house where I received the glad hand of genial Jim and was soon thawed out. We talked until 1:00 A. M. Sunday, and then retired to the little bedroom which is used by Jim as the cabinet. Jim won't sleep there, for he says they annoy and keep him awake; but they did not disturb the writer and my sleep was peaceful.

During the day I remarked to Jim that I had known him so long (twenty years) so favorably, that he had been a fine instrument in giving this beautiful philosophy to the people, thousands having witnessed it, and that he was so favorably known over the United States and foreign countries, and that there were millions who would like an authentic account of his life; so I believed I ought to write it and enlighten those who were unable to come and see him. He replied, "Vlerebome, I wish you would. Nothing would please me better." I had not thought of doing this; it was farthest from my thoughts. Possibly Mr. Benton and Dr. Powell impressed me to do this, who knows? I think so at any rate.

That evening, May 2d, Jim went into the cabinet. Those present were Mrs. Riley, her mother, and the writer. Jim says, "Vlerebome, take hold of my hand," which I did. He held it a moment. I dropped the curtain, arranged the folds at the bottom, arose, and started to my chair, when the curtain parted and there stood my friend, W. S. Strong, of whom I spoke in a previous chapter, when George Washington appeared. I spoke to him. "Why, how do you do, Strong?" He bowed. Within two minutes my brother George appeared and was apparently pleased that he could come to me. That brother was very dear to me; we had been in business together and many times we had come to each other's help, fighting the battles of life. He bowed and sank to the floor and in a very few minutes a form appeared, a medium-sized man with a large beard. I asked if it was for me. He nodded, "Yes." "Is it a



Engine Built under Instructions of Spirit Whitney

relative?" I asked. He shook his head. "Is it a friend?" He nodded "Yes." He was sinking to the floor. I said, "Please write on the slate who you are."

Another form appeared which was recognized by Mrs. Riley and her mother. Jim coughed which is always the sign to raise the curtains. He came out, and in fifteen minutes he re-entered the cabinet. After singing perhaps ten minutes, I heard the scratching of the pencil on the slate and shortly we were notified in the usual way to raise the curtains and Jim came out of the cabinet. I examined the slate and received a message from Mr. Benton which read as follows: "Mr. V. we are glad to have you with us again." John Benton.

The following message was received from Dr. Powell: "Now, my dear sir; I am more than pleased to be your assistant in your future work. I was a surgeon in an American regiment during the Civil War. We will give you something fine for the book while you are here in October, next, for that is the date fixed by us for the commencement of the manuscript." Dr. Powell.

I will add here that I wrote Jim in June that the seventh of August would suit me better on account of my business, and to ask Mr. Benton and Dr. Powell if that would suit them, and they replied August would suit them just as well.

While I was at Jim's home May 2nd, he told me about a gasoline traction engine built under the direction of Eli Whitney from the spirit side of life, that would pull three and one-half times its own weight, would turn fourteen furrows, and plow two hundred or more acres a day. I remarked, "Why, Jim, I saw that written

up in some paper a few months ago, of how they took it to a field near Hamilton, Ohio, and it plowed at the rate of two hundred acres per day."

Two years ago Fred A. Gerling of Portland, Oregon, came to Jim's home with his wife and informed him that a spirit had told him how to build a gasoline traction engine that would pull three and one-half times its own weight and plow two hundred acres of ground. The spirit, Eli Whitney, inventor of the Whitney Rifle and Cotton Gin, had told him to go to Mr. Riley, of Marcellus, Michigan, and through him receive further instructions. Mr. Gerling and wife stayed at Jim's for two weeks and many sittings were had. Mr. Whitney wrote on the slate how to construct this engine in all its details. He went to Connersville, Indiana, to carry out the instructions of Eli Whitney; viz., to form a stock company, build an engine, and get it patented. When he told the capitalists where he got his information how to build the engine, they laughed at him, but his ideas seemed plausible, and they took stock which was sold in different cities.

An engine was built at Connersville; it was taken to Hamilton, Ohio; it did everything Mr. Whitney said it would do. The capital stock was increased, a plant was built at Forth Worth, Texas, and Mr. Gerling has written Jim that they have a lot of orders, some from China, to pull trains on the highway. Mr. Gerling has a device about completed whereby he can hear and talk with the spirits without the aid of a medium.

While at Jim's house I wrote Mr. Gerling at Fort Worth, Texas, asking him how he was succeeding in



F. E. GERLING

perfecting the instrument whereby anyone could communicate with the spirits without the aid of a medium. I have just received a reply from his wife as follows:

Woodstock, Ore., Oct. 4, 1909.

"MR. A. VLEREBOME, Cleveland, Ohio,

Dear Sir:

My husband sent your letter to me some time ago and requested me to write you concerning the same, that it was impossible for him to write in detail as he was so busy. (Mr. Gerling is president and manager of the company which is called Multnomah Mechanical Manufacturing Co., Fort Worth, Texas.) In regard to the device by which the mortal man may communicate with the spirit, Mr. Eli Whitney, Mr. Gerling's main control, has told him that he, Mr. Whitney, will impress him how to build a spirit telephone.

Mr. Gerling wishes me to say that he has seen mediumship in all its phases, and that Mr. Riley's mediumship is the most complete and beautiful with which he has ever come in contact.

Mrs. F. A. Gerling."

We are often asked by non-believers: "What good does Spiritualism do?" Here is an instance where a device is given to the world which is of incalculable value. In 1882 wireless telegraphy was predicted by the spirits. A full account of it will be given you in a later chapter. I have known of many instances where men who were drunkards went to sittings, their spirit relatives came to them and pleaded with them to stop it, and they took their advice and made men of themselves.

Here is a case where through Jim's mediumship a man who was on the downward path, was reclaimed by his sister. When a man says Spiritualism does not do any good, he simply shows his ignorance. A prominent druggist in the southern part of Michigan, having a nice business, got to drinking and neglecting his business. He would leave his business and go off on a protracted spree. He was on one of those sprees with a companion, and happened to pick up a Grand Rapids paper giving an account of a sitting at Farmer Riley's home. He became interested and said to his companion, "Let's go and see this man." And they went. They, of course, came to Jim, perfect strangers, and took their seats with the rest of the sitters. The slate was handed out to him; he went out to the sitting-room to read the message. He stayed so long, Jim's wife went out to see what detained him. He was crying and said, "My God, is this true?" He had received a message from his sister who was in spirit life; she had admonished him for his drinking and neglecting his business, and showed him what his condition would be in spirit life when he came there. He turned to Jim's wife and handed her a quart bottle of liquor and said, with his sister's help, he never would drink another drop of liquor while he lived. And he never has to this day. This happened several years ago. He wrote Jim a beautiful letter calling Jim his Saviour. Jim cannot find the letter, and I am sorry that I cannot reproduce it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Tribute to Riley's Mediumship—Clippings From a Monroe, Mich., Paper—Also One From the Ft. Angeles, Wash., Paper.

“To the Editor:—Enclosed find postal note for the renewal of my subscription to the best, boldest, and most independent Spiritualist paper that I have ever read. I want to also add my testimony to the merits of one of the truest and best mediums I know, Mr. James Riley. His manifestations are really grand, convincing, and in every way satisfactory. I have been personally acquainted with him for several years, and I believe him to be in every respect honest, and conscientious. So sensitive is he to doubts and suspicions of strangers and visitants, that he invites the most rigid tests. Very rarely is a seance closed without the materialization of one or more friends of the sitters, from the tiny infant to those of old age, who often walk out, shake hands and converse with them.”

“With such proofs of immortal life all over the country, it appears to me that Agnostics and Materialists ought to be converted. Mr. Riley is doing a good work, and Spiritualists ought to rally around him, and give him such financial support as to relieve him of the bur-

den and care of furnishing bread and butter for his family. His service in the War of the Rebellion, and hard labor since, has rendered him nearly a physical wreck, and if he is to be employed by the spirit-world many years more as a bridge to this world, his physical body must be cared for. Let us all remember that the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Dr. A. J. Kinney, Decatur, Michigan.

Taken from a Monroe, Michigan, paper.

"James Riley and his wife, materializing mediums of Marcellus, Mich., were in Monroe several days during the past week. They held quite a number of seances with local Spiritualists and have created great interest. Mr. Riley is known as "Farmer Riley" and is recognized by Spiritualists as the greatest materializing medium in the country. Those interested, consider themselves very fortunate in getting them here. The seances increased in attendance each night, nor were the visitors composed entirely of believers. There were many "Doubting Thomases" who were attracted by the fame of the medium and attended the seance. The subject of Spiritualism has been widely discussed in our city this week as a result of Riley's visit. All sorts of opinions believers point to Riley's materializations as positive are advanced. There are those who would brush the whole subject aside with the cry of "humbug." The believers point to Riley's materializations as positive proof of the truth of their doctrines. Between the extremes are many shades of belief, from the occultist who sees in the materializations the recall of base instincts

of the departed, to the large class who, while not condemning Spiritualism in toto, refuse to accept as sufficient the evidence presented."

Twenty years ago the secular papers would rarely give an account of sittings or meetings of the Spiritualists. It is now a common occurrence. It shows that the masses are beginning to think for themselves, and are demanding knowledge on this subject. In April, 1899, Jim was at Port Angeles, Washington, and gave a number of sittings there. This article appeared in one of their papers, April 29, 1899.

A Sermon with a Spiritual Test. Spirit is the Builder
Of Nature.

Farmer Riley's Materializations.

"His power comes from One who says, 'I am the Life and Resurrection.' 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.'"

"The spirit of man is as much finer than atmosphere, as atmosphere is finer than water, and when materialized by the energy of the vital forces concentrated by the will of persons being in harmony with each other. It is then its communication is established between the mundane and celestial world; you become *en rapport* with your spiritual affinities, and they respond to your wishes, that is, if the conditions are right; but there must be on your part an honest desire to obtain that power. It may take you a year or less. You are not to get it as easily as you think you will. In the first place, it

will require much patience to learn how to concentrate the will to silence thought so as to become passive and indifferent to the outside world, and then the trance state may be obtained and the spirits take control."

"The first appearance of materialization is a light vapor gathered by the spirits who have control of the medium. In the twinkling of an eye this light vapor is formed into a person that has been dead more or less than a year, and appears before you to prove a here-after, and stays long enough for you to see that there is no fraud about it. Sometimes they will pass a slate, or take up a flower from the table, but they soon dissolve again to their spiritual sphere."

"Now then, for a minister in talking about this Gospel and saying that it is all nonsense and a delusion, and the fakers of India could do the same things, admitting they can, they have obtained the gift the same as Mr. Riley did. Now then, you hear that those mediums are far superior to our American mediums. They materialize trees, flowers, ropes, but manage to finish just in the right time before their materializations melt away. Instead of the churches being against them, the church should stand up for them because it only confirms the truth of the materialization of Jesus and his materializing Moses and Elias on the Mount. I would like to know what the churches are here for, whether they are for the evolution of spiritual things, or just for a place of pride and fashion. Every minister's mission should be to make known the Spiritual World. The people are tired of words that need proving. It is no use talking, brethren and sisters of the church. There are

many that do not believe in Jesus and his miracles, and those that do believe, think it strange that a man in our city can show to the people those that they know to be dead."

"The doubting Thomases are numerous, and the ministers are alarmed at the second coming of Christ. 'I am the Life and the Resurrection.' 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake.' The truth that 'I am the life of every man's spirit,' and 'I am the power that the people are ignorant of today; without me the spirit can do nothing. I am the mighty force that moves the world.' 'Blessed are those who believe and hath not yet seen,' 'Behold I come with tens of thousands of my saints to put down the rest of the enemies of truth and righteousness; all of these shall be brought to the knowledge and love of their fellowmen,' which is the love of Jesus, meaning he shall save his people."

"Spiritualism is right; some claim they can duplicate it. In the first place, they can't melt a materialized form into nothingness in a few seconds or bring out of the cabinet a dozen materialized forms. I do not believe it will go well with these who perpetrate frauds on the people. They are kindling a consuming fire in their own souls. Let them be sure that they are right, and then go ahead."

George S. King.

On Materialization and the Wishes of Individuals.

We have heard certain ones make this remark, that

"If Mr. Riley will materialize my father or any one that has passed over to the other side I will give one hundred dollars." Now then, be it understood that he, Mr. Riley, is not at liberty to do what they require, because he is under the control of the spiritualistic world and they of the spiritual world, not he, materialize whom they see fit; that is, if the conditions are right and favorable for them to appear, they will make themselves manifest, but no blame must be attached to the medium for he is helpless to perform it. So therefore, the people do misunderstand the phenomena. They must accept the truth as it is shown to them, whether relatives or strangers.

There are several who have seen their fathers, Mr. Z., Mr. K., and Mr. W., and they are reliable men to be depended upon. These formalities are required to get harmony, and then comes the vibrating of this mysterious power, bringing into existence the materialization which can be done in anyone's house. "Yes," some will say, "what is this mysterious power?" It is the same as the Master that giveth life to all nature, and this power is the energy of force which is none other than Christ, himself, showing His power to bring all men unto Him. The same magnetism that comes from a minister of the Gospel when his soul is wrapt up in divine prayer, goes to the hearts of the people who are to be converted. "The Lord works in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." Therefore why should we mortals be proud and selfish? "Doubt not." Behold, it is written, "Greater things than these thou shalt see."

CHAPTER XXIV.

How to be En Rapport With the Spiritual World, by G. S. K.—
A Pleasant Account of a Visit to Farmer Riley From the
"Progressive Thinker"—Another Letter From Minnesota
From the Same Paper.

The mind must concentrate on all conceptive thoughts emanating from that source, and devote two hours each day before any desired results will take place. It comes in this wise by listening to thought and perfecting it by the use of the will power and giving it energy to vibrate into existence; everybody has to do this in order to carry out any project or problem. It took Elias Howe twenty years to perfect the sewing machine, but it took Brother Riley, according to his own statement, two years before he got the long desired results; now, the mode of operation is the same now as at first, as you see it at his manifestations, yet there are a great many doubting Thomases thinking there must be some humbug about it. It requires formalities to carry out the law of his manifestations. Why don't some of your wiseacres study the forces? How can you accomplish anything without study or labor? You are not willing to get anything without your heart and soul is *en rapport* with the ideal of your affections. Can you learn mechanics without the use of the tools? And there is this in it

too; the talent must be there and the desire to perfect it. It is not everyone that is adapted for all purposes; some are for one thing, and some for another. There are some that could not tell "Yankee Doodle" from "Old Zip Coon." The talent or spirit of music is not in the individual, yet they may desire it. Some can see spirits, while others are not able to see them. Spirit is just as much finer than the atmosphere, as atmosphere is finer than transparent glass when not materialized; but the life of the spirit, its soul, is as much finer than spirit, as spirit is finer than the atmosphere, and this power is the word or *logos*, the first born of the great cause of all that exists, and the power that moves all worlds.

In it we move and have our being, and this is the force given to the spirits, and that people are trying to find out. It is the origin of all thought and laws and the prime mover of the will, force and energy of man. And no man can compound it or comprehend it. The four elements and their subordinates are the evolutions from this mighty power; or else how could it materialize? What is this life to all eternity? A few days and full of evil. There is one stumbling block that retards Spiritualism, and that is the almighty dollar. It seems that all of the people have gone astray after worldly riches instead of heavenly. They do not entertain the good and the beautiful, but rather the evil, and hence their mistrust.

J. D. Sanford's visit with Jim, published in the "Progressive Thinker." Seances that were highly satisfactory and convincing.

"Having recently spent two weeks at the pleasant home of 'Farmer Riley,' as he is familiarly called, I desire to express through your columns something of the gratitude I feel to the angel-world, not only, but also to those who have in the relation of their blessed experiences so often cheered my heart when I felt that hungry longing which only those can know who realize the inestimable worth of every faithful assurance of Immortality. *Such assurance I there received.* The first week of my stay we had no seances, as Mr. Riley was absent, but with unbounded hospitality I was entertained by his estimable wife, whose sacrifices for the cause of truth can never be overestimated, and the many startling facts related to me of the patience and persistence of their efforts in the earlier experience, and demonstrations which came to them have served as much as anything I have ever known to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that those we have mourned as dead are ever ready to make their presence and power known to us whenever we make the needed conditions. To be where the angels 'were wont to meet' and witness for myself their 'coming and going' was a privilege I had long coveted."

"The return of Mr. Riley was greeted by a large number of letters, asking for 'dates,' but too numerous for all to be gratified. Those who were privileged to come were richly paid. Early in the evening, and before the

materializing seance, a dark circle was held of about ten in number, seated around a table on which lay a guitar. The instant the lights were extinguished the guitar was caught up with a loud twang, and floating over our heads near the ceiling, poured out enchanting strains while everyone was consciously affected by the harmonious influence, as unseen hands were caressingly placed upon our heads, faces and shoulders, and every token that love could bestow assured us of the presence of our spirit friends, while raps were heard, and beautiful lights were seen; even the 'thin veil between us' seemed for the time removed, as later, when the materializing seance began, about twenty forms came out of the cabinet, one after another, being recognized by their friends, as the room was so light one could almost see to read, and every feature and detail of dress could be plainly scrutinized."

"I was made personally happy to recognize my brother who had passed to spirit life twenty years ago; also an old friend and pioneer of Spiritualism, who had been on the 'other side' two years, and who had often assured me he would improve every opportunity to remind his friend that he still lived, which assurance he has more than once verified. We were permitted to shake hands with some of those who were strong enough, and also to receive slate messages not a few."

"On one occasion an old neighbor whose skepticism had long resisted his desire to witness these manifestations, unexpectedly entered, but was cordially received, and who, when he saw the form of a short but pleasant-faced lady at the opening of the curtains, sprang up in

great excitement, exclaiming, 'My God, that is my mother!' at which the spirit seemed to be greatly overcome and partly faded from view; but urged to reappear she soon returned, and so great was the surprise and delight of the hitherto unbelieving son, that he could hardly be induced to retain his seat. That was as convincing as if it had been my own mother who appeared, and I felt the same, as slate after slate was passed out through the curtains bearing messages of cheer and love. As was customary, some of the sitters had, before placing the slates in the cabinet, written questions on them asking direct answers, and as the slates were handed out it was found that in many instances the answers were written between the lines with the utmost precision, and in varied handwriting which no mortal eye could see to do in the intense darkness of the cabinet, while the answers were satisfying in the extreme—clear cut and to the point; names being signed which it was impossible for the medium to have known."

"One gentleman who was present, and was suffering great pain, was called to take a seat near the curtain opening at which a tall form was beckoning him, who proved to be a physician, and proceeded to give the sick man a vigorous treatment in plain sight of all present, and consuming about ten minutes time, resulting in complete relief and entire absence of all pain. A large music box was then brought out of the cabinet by a spirit who placed it in the hands of one of the sitters by whom it was soon laid on the table near by, when immediately another and taller form strode rapidly out of the aperture, and though the box weighed more than eighteen

pounds, instantly lifted it with a slight touch as though it had been a featherweight, bearing it quickly into the cabinet."

"On another evening while several forms appeared, and walked out into the room, we could hear the voice of Mr. Riley's control gently reassuring those who were trying to clothe themselves so as to be recognized by their friends, bidding them watch the others, and not get excited, but to be calm and confident, and I then learned that to most of those who try to materialize, their first attempt is hindered by the fear that perhaps they may not be able to throw off the form they thus assume, and scarcely dare to venture, so does it seem to them like the change called death; so little do we know of the effort they make to manifest their presence."

"It would take too much to speak of all the wonderful things there witnessed, but I cannot forbear to add, that if anyone wants a living feast, and a perfect assurance of the reality of a life beyond, let him enjoy a visit to this delightful spot where everything bears the seal of genuineness, and fraud is out of the question. I am myself a born skeptic but I confess I had no use for skepticism there. Long may Mr. Riley be spared to give these blessed proofs of spirit return."

J. D. Sanford, Saginaw, Mich.

Materialization. A Visit from Farmer Riley and its Results.

"The little village of Bermidji, Minnesota, has had a visit from one of the most notable mediums in the world, Mr. James Riley, of Marcellus, Michigan. To say peo-

ple of this progressive little hamlet are in a fever of excitement over the wonderful convincing proofs of spirit return is only lightly speaking. One year ago I was presumptuous enough to believe I might be able to induce this wonderful man to visit us and give us a chance to see our darling spirit friends once more in the material body; so a correspondence was begun and not until this fall did I succeed in getting Brother Riley interested in this direction. I even wonder now how we were ever so fortunate, as the talent our dear brother has developed is certainly wonderful."

"The long journey of almost a thousand miles was certainly the most discouraging feature of it all to one getting far over in the shade as Brother Riley is, and then going among strangers alone and sitting among skeptics was another barrier to good results." (Right here the author would say that Jim *never* went on long trips away from home to give sittings without consulting his control, and always good results followed; in fact, he has always obeyed his instructions in everything)." But we are certainly convinced that only a man made of the material Brother Riley is, would ever have undertaken it."

"The first one of the most convincing tests given by the controls in Mr. Riley's seance was the appearance of my brother-in-law, Mr. E. J. Achenbach, who passed to spirit life one year ago. Every sitter in the room had known him for several years and all exclaimed, 'There is Mr. Achenbach!' The next spirit to come to convince the skeptics was Mr. George Carson, a man known by everyone in the town and who was called the

father of the town. His wife, who was a skeptic, recognized him at once as did everyone in the room. He shook hands and every line in the face was perfectly distinct. My husband who has been a life-long skeptic has been fully convinced. Among the rest who were skeptics and were convinced were Mrs. D. Farley, Mrs. M. Spain, Mrs. G. Carson, Mr. and Mrs. J. Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Brinkman, and Mr. M. J. Lindahl, all of Bermidji."

"During Mr. Riley's seances over twenty-five forms materialized and all were recognized. One of the most wonderful features of it all was the excellent slate writing. Many beautiful messages were written by the loved ones gone to the other life. Very few people in Bermidji now doubt Spiritualism, and if Brother Riley were to return it would be an easy matter to procure the band to meet him at the train. Brother Riley's materializing needs no recommendation. He furnishes the proof beyond a doubt. Several of the gentlemen who doubted the power of the spirits were invited into the cabinet and while sitting quietly in their chairs, were given such a gentle toss into the air that before they landed every remaining doubt had taken flight."

"About fifty people in all visited the seance and all are glad to say that they are Spiritualists. Brother Riley gave us all a rare treat by preparing a dark room where a circle of friends were blessed by loving touches from spirit friends; our combs were removed by the angel hands, pansies were carried around the circle and tucked in our hair, the tambourine was shaken vigorously over our heads, a cup of water full of pansies was carried

several feet and placed on the table; they then removed the pansies and the water was sprinkled in our faces; it is all beautiful to explain. May Mr. Riley be permitted to remain with us many years to give to the people these beautiful truths."

CHAPTER XXV.

A Loving Tribute to Jim's Mediumship, Greater Than Lincoln—
The Character of Familiar Spirits—L. A. Sherman Has Jim
Come to His Residence at Pt. Huron, Mich., to Give Sit-
tings.

November 29, 1896, Jim received a beautiful portrait of Abraham Lincoln on glass from W. H. H. Tucker of Streator, Illinois. Jim and his wife spent three or four days at Streator, and gave sittings. The testimonial is written on the back of the portrait, as follows:

"My Dear Friend:

Mr. Riley, I present this picture to you as a token of esteem and brotherhood. I believe the picture is the likeness of one of the great men in history of time, but I beg the liberty to speak or write the truth; although Abraham Lincoln was a wonderful man, I know from certain knowledge that he was not half as wonderful as Farmer Riley; your four days spent at my home will ever be kindly remembered with brotherly love.

I wish with this little token to extend to you and your good wife the love and esteem of the good people who had the honor and pleasure of meeting you both, and I assure you that your wonderful manifestations of spirit materialization will never be forgotten by any of us. We now know positively that we do live after that change

called death. Our spirit friends seem to say, 'Heaven bless you for coming to us,' and they love you for your unselfishness as much as we do."

Ever your friend,
W. H. H. Tucker."

Those who enter upon the investigation of spirit phenomena with an honest desire to develop and learn the truth must divest themselves of many preconceived ideas. If the existence of the soul as the ego of man, independently of the body and the continuity of life, are realities, then the soul passes into the excarnate life with just the knowledge and characteristics possessed by it when it leaves the incarnate life. A child here, is a child in the spirit life when it passes over, with all its love of play and pranks. An honest man on this side of life, has only honest desires upon the other side, while a wicked man finds himself in the darkness and despair which sin deserves.

Faith in the continuity of life while still incarnate, helps the excarnate soul to understand the new life and to make advancement in it. Love, Charity, Honesty, and other virtues, exercised while in the flesh, make a place for the soul among the higher order of spirits when the silver-lighted river is crossed, with prompt realization of spiritual happiness. Those who imagine that death of the physical body means a long sleep for the soul, or that life on the other side is occupied with eternal psalm singing, must divest themselves of such notions or they will be greatly shocked when the reality is made known to them.

Spirits who become the controls or "familiar spirits" of mediums are mainly the wanderers of spirit-land. They are Indian girls, children of Nature, who delight to linger on the earth plane, or the waifs who fail to find congenial companionship on the spirit side of life among those who were near to them by blood in the earth life. Usually such spirits report themselves by a single name only, and quite frequently they refuse to give more than the merest outline of their life upon earth. Familiar spirit controls, as a class, might be designated as the messenger boys of spirit-land chosen to convey messages between the two worlds. But back of these message bearers there are usually bands of spirits of high order, who sometimes control mediums directly, and speak through them for specific and noble purposes. Such spirits come back with all the courtesy and dignity of men and women of high cultivation, and they speak with all the fervor and eloquence of the world's greatest orators.

Mr. Sherman, author of "Science of the Soul," says:

"My first observation of full form materialization occurred at my own residence. The medium, Mr. James Riley, whom I had never seen until four o'clock the same afternoon, came to my house shortly before ten o'clock in the evening. The 'cabinet' was my own bedroom, every door of which had been previously locked, nailed, and sealed. The room in which the circle was formed was my study, the door between the two rooms being closed by heavy portieres. The medium sat down in an ordinary chair, having on only black clothing. Within ten minutes after taking his seat, the medium spoke the

name of a relative of my wife, who had died fifteen years previously, as being present in spirit. Then all was silent for a few minutes, the medium having passed into a trance, until the curtain parted and the figure of a man a full head taller than the medium, clothed in a dress suit with white shirt and collar, stepped out and said 'Good evening.' As the figure stood there it dissolved away, the head dropping down until it reached the floor, and disappeared. This was the cabinet control Mr. Benton."

"The next figure which appeared was that of a woman, said to be one whose name had been spoken by the medium. It was somewhat indistinct, and the lights in the room being turned higher afterward, better results were obtained. Following this closely, two or three male figures appeared which were not fully recognized, but a voice from the cabinet mentioned a circumstance which a gentleman present recognized as one known only to himself and a deceased friend, and the inference was that one of the figures seen, was his spirit in material clothing. The next figure came out at one side of the curtain and was recognized by a lady sitting on that side of the circle, as her deceased father. He was much taller than the medium, and had distinctive characteristics of face and form, all of these characteristics being distinctly observed by those who sat on that side of the circle."

"The next motioned to Mrs. Sherman, and was said to be that of a deceased brother. She advanced to the door and took it by the hand, and it said, in a squeaky voice 'How do you do?' The brother had been a law-

yer during his earth life, and Mrs. Sherman noticed especially that the hand was soft like that of a man unaccustomed to manual labor. The next figure beckoned to me, and was said to be my father. I advanced and took its hand, and noticed especially that the hand felt like that of a farmer or working man. As I clasped the hand, it first grasped mine so that I felt a distinct pressure, and then the grasp relaxed and the hand seemed to melt away and slip out of mine. At the same time, as I looked full in the face of the figure, it fell backward and melted away."

"Shortly after this, the figure of a man stepped out into the room and glided three steps, following a gentleman who had risen from his chair, and was moving towards the door on the opposite side of the room. It then turned, and to my vision dissolved in the room. One gentleman present, thought he saw it pass back between the curtains; others agreed with me that it did not go back, and some were uncertain. The sudden and unexpected appearance of the figure was startling, and the entire event did not occupy fifteen seconds of time. One gentleman who sat where he could look the figure full in the face, said it resembled my oldest son closely enough to be his brother. My second son had died in infancy, nineteen years previous. Later in the evening a slate was handed out on which the statement was written that Mr. Benton, the cabinet control, was trying to materialize Willie's spirit, but he was so excited they could not keep him quiet long enough to accomplish it."

"At one time a figure stepped partly out into the room and took from a mantel near the door, a large

bunch of sweet peas. Afterwards these were distributed among several of those sitting in the circle who stepped up to the curtain and asked for them. It must be said regarding these manifestations that it was utterly impossible for the medium to have a confederate, and if he 'made up' to produce the figures, he must have done it with material concealed under his ordinary clothes. He must also have had with him something to increase his height, and to change the feeling of his hand from that of a professional man to that of a farmer. My father was a farmer at the time of his death, while my wife's brother was a lawyer, and we both noticed especially the distinctive characteristics of the hands we grasped."

"During the evening the curtains between the two rooms were several times thrown back, and we found the medium sitting as we had left him, without any sign of a change having been made in his clothing. Usually he would come out of the trance and call to have the curtains drawn back within a minute or two after figures had appeared. I, myself, was thoroughly convinced on this occasion that the figures which appeared were actual materializations, and that under the circumstances, it would have been impossible for the medium to have made them up. Afterward, I had still stronger proof of the genuineness of manifestations through this medium."

"The next evening I attended a seance given by the same medium at the house of a friend. On this occasion Mr. Benton, the cabinet control, materialized and stepped out between the parted curtains, but did not speak. A moment afterward he came out at one side of

the curtain, and took from a mantel two slates which had been placed there, those in charge having forgotten to put them in the back parlor where the medium was sitting. Shortly afterward, one of the slates was handed out and was found to contain the following writing:

'Dear Papa and Mamma: I am trying so hard to materialize. Oh, how happy I am since you know your Willie is not gone from you! I will come if I can. I live in a nice world; plenty of nice children. I go to school.

Your Willie.'

Later in the evening the curtains parted and Willie's face appeared, as he had frequently 'popped' it out between the curtains at his home during life, when he wanted to surprise some one. No notice had been given us that he was to materialize at that particular time, and the sudden appearance of his face in a manner so entirely characteristic of him startled me. I jumped to my feet and cried, "Willie, Willie, boy!" and Mrs. Sherman started forward. In our excitement we forgot that movements in the presence of materialized forms should be quiet, as sudden disturbances of the atmosphere are liable to cause them to dissolve, and before Mrs. Sherman could reach the curtain the face fell away and disappeared."

"Only a few in the room had ever seen Willie in life, but the face was so distinct while it remained in view, that all recognized its characteristics, especially the hair combed 'pompadour,' as Willie had always worn it in life, when it was long enough to comb at all. The circumstances were such that I knew it would have been quite impossible for the medium to have made up the face, and

I could not doubt that it was just what it appeared to be—Willie's face materialized. At one time, earlier in the evening, when the curtains moved, and I was hoping to see Willie, I went forward and reached my hand into the cabinet. It was grasped at once by a man's hand, the same I had taken at my own residence the previous evening. Soon after, my father's face and form appeared and I again took the hand and held it until it melted away in my grasp, the face and body disappearing at the same time. Many figures appeared during the sitting; at one time the form of a little old lady came out and remained some time. The face was recognized by a gentleman present as that of his mother, and he went forward and took her hand. I watched this figure carefully, and distinctly saw it melt away until the head and face rested on the floor, and dissolved there."

"A man who appeared to be sixty years of age came out twice, the last time stepping well out into the room and motioning to a man who stood some feet back of me, by whom he was recognized. All this time the lamp in the back part of the room gave out so much light that I read the slate writings which were handed out by it. At another time during the sitting, Mr. Benton stepped out into the room with a pitcher of water which a gentleman took and placed on the mantel. I subsequently took the pitcher in my hands and found it to be nearly full of water, the weight being several pounds."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mr. Sherman Has a Sitting With Jim in Detroit, Mich.—Wireless Telegraphy Predicted by The Spirits in 1882—Sitting August 16th, 1909—Jim Gives a Sitting at Camp Haslet Park; Four Hundred People Present, With Good Results.

A few weeks ago I had another sitting with the medium in the city of Detroit. We sat for two hours and a half, until midnight, without any results. Then the medium took lunch and went back into the room which was used for a cabinet. The curtains had hardly closed behind him, when the figure of a man came out at one side and was recognized by a lady present. Within a minute afterward Mr. Benton, the control, parted the curtains and stood before us. In this case the medium could scarcely have changed his coat between the time I saw him pass into the cabinet, and the time a figure appeared, not resembling him in the least.

Many personal friends in whose honesty and sound judgment I have perfect confidence have reported to me their experience with this medium. At the residence of one of my friends the medium stepped behind curtains which had been hung across the corner of the parlor to form a cabinet, and before the lady of the house could reach the lamp to turn it down, a man, fully a head taller than she, stepped out. She recognized him as her father.

He came up and put his arm around her in a manner so characteristic of his demonstrations of affection when in physical life, that it could not be mistaken. Several other friends of those present materialized, and all passed around the circle, shaking hands.

Three other friends have reported to me that they have seen this medium sitting in a trance in the cabinet, on different occasions, when materialized forms were out in the room. One gentleman sat with him one evening until midnight, without results. The medium then took lunch and went back into the cabinet. Very soon afterward, Mr. Benton parted the curtains, walked around a stove in the room, and going back to the door of the room where the medium was sitting, drew aside the curtains, saying to the gentleman, "You see me here, do you not? Now look into the cabinet and you will see my medium;" which he did. The gentleman then entered into conversation with the control, saying, "Mr. Benton, I often hear you say in the cabinet, 'Don't be afraid.' Why do you say that?" Mr. Benton replied, "I say it to encourage other spirits whom we are trying to clothe with material form. To those on the spirit side of life who have never materialized, it is like the change you call death, passing from one form of existence to another, and they are afraid to undertake it." "What condition are you in now, Mr. Benton?" was asked.

Reply: "I am a material being, just as you are. If I was not, I could not walk, or talk, or perform any other physical act as you see me do. Materialization is in effect placing the soul back into a physical body; sometimes it may be only a shell; sometimes it may be with

all the organs. Volumes might be filled with reports of materialization supported by evidence entirely unimpeachable."

In materialization, as in nearly all other forms of spirit phenomena, it is demonstrated that incarnate souls may become the center and source of the phenomena the same as decarnate souls. At one of Mr. Riley's sittings at his home, his boy, Fred, of sixteen years or thereabouts, parted the curtains and showed himself. Some of those in the circle exclaimed, "It looks like Fred," who was upstairs asleep. Upon closer scrutiny all agreed that it was Fred. Not knowing what might have happened, Mrs. Riley, alarmed, hastened upstairs to Fred's bedroom and was relieved at finding Fred asleep and breathing. Mr. Benton, the control, afterwards explained that, finding Fred asleep, they called his soul downstairs and materialized it as an experiment.

The following is taken from the "Science of the Soul":
"Materialization of decarnate souls is a demonstrated fact. The evidence is overwhelming. Frauds may be sometimes practiced by bogus mediums, but such frauds do not prove that there are no genuine materializations, any more than the fact that wooden Indians are sometimes used as signs for tobacco shops, proves that there are no genuine Indians. Neither does the fact that the materialized forms do not always closely resemble those whose spirits are supposed to be thus clothed, as they looked in physical life, or the further fact that they sometimes bear a close resemblance to the medium, prove that fraud is committed. The soul of the medium may be projected and materialized, or the magnetism

drawn from him to render the materializations possible, may cause them to take on some of his physical characteristics."

"Jesus Christ in materialized form was not recognized by those who knew him best in physical life, until he announced his identity by word of mouth; yet the creeds and doctrines of Christian churches are based upon the actuality of his resurrection and subsequent materialization. St. Paul went still further, and declared that if the dead rise not, then Christ did not rise, and if Christ rose not, then are the Christians' faith and preaching vain."

(Wireless telegraphy predicted by the spirits in 1882. Electricity as a motor power demonstrated by the spirits in 1850.)

In 1882 Dr. Wolf of Cincinnati brought Mrs. Hollister, a medium, to that city from Louisville, Kentucky. A number of sittings were had, and were attended by many prominent people of that city, among them Murat Halstead, Don Piatt, and others. The results of the sittings were published in the "Cincinnati Gazette," now called the "Commercial Tribune." At one of these sittings Dr. Wolf was talking to Mrs. Hollister's control, James Nolen. Nolen said that they were perfecting a device whereby they could control the electrical currents in the air with the aid of a powerful battery on earth, so that the people on earth could communicate a great distance without the use of wires, when they could find an instrument, a man, to bring it out. This was, as stated before, in 1882. Marconi was the man, the "instrument" that produced it. I have been reliably informed that Marconi married a Spiritualist and he is also of the same faith.

Electricity as a motor power :

In 1850 a gentleman in Boston built an electric motor under the direction of those on the other side of life. It worked. The orthodox people heard of it and one night they destroyed it, saying it was the devil's work. The man who built the motor published a small pamphlet at the time, giving a description of it and said, "The people are not ready yet to receive it, but fifty years hence, electricity will be the motor power," and such became true. There is no doubt in my mind that all of the good things we get along this line are from the spirit world; those who invent, are impressed by the spirits how to produce them. Our friends in spirit life help us in many ways. Many on earth manage their business under the direction of their friends in the other life. I will give my experience with trumpet mediums in the latter part of this book; in that experience there were two cases of this kind of which I will give a full account.

At our last sitting Mr. Benton had written on the slate that we were not to have any more public seances, for they were getting ready to give us something fine for the book. We held no sittings for several days thinking perhaps a rest would be good for Jim and make conditions stronger. Monday evening, August 16th, we decided to have a sitting. During the day we went to Marcellus and Jim was importuned on all sides to let them come out to his house. A traveling man from Chicago, who had been at Jim's house some time previously, 'phoned to Jim wanting to know if he could not come out that evening. Jim told him to call up at seven o'clock that evening and he would give him an

answer ; I had taken a walk down the road. The gentleman 'phoned at seven ; of course, I was sorry to disappoint him. I told him that Mr. Benton had said no more public sittings during the writing of the manuscript, and that Mr. Benton's word was law. Of course he was disappointed, but this life is full of disappointments.

At nine o'clock Jim went into the cabinet ; we sang probably ten minutes when scratching or writing on the slates was heard, and in a few minutes, the signal was given to raise the curtains. We had two messages on the slates ; one read :

"Friends:—Excuse us tonight as we will not be ready to give our work until Wednesday eve ; we are all working for the success of the book ; Wednesday eve at nine, sharp. (Signed), Benton and Powell."

When this message was read to Jim, he said several years ago, Mr. Benton had written on the slate to commence the seance sharp at 9:00 P. M. ; it was some ten minutes after nine when Jim went into the cabinet. The first manifestation they received was a message on the slate from Mr. Benton, saying, "Do not let this occur again," thus showing that when they set a time for manifestations, they want Jim to be prompt.

On this evening, August 16th, the other message on the slate, was to Mrs. Riley from her father. When the slate was thrust through the opening of the curtain I started to take it, but it was pulled back, and Mrs. Riley received it, which read as follows :

"Sis:— Ma will come home, satisfied to stay now, poor lonely being. Now Sis, don't work too hard. Love to Jim. (Signed) Pa."

I would state here that Mrs. Riley's mother had lived at Jim's for several years past. She has property at Rochester, Michigan, and went there several weeks ago, but is not satisfied and has intimated in her letters to Mrs. Riley that she would like to return to Jim's home. She is seventy-four years old. She attends all the public sittings that Jim gives and usually fills the slate with questions to her husband, and the questions are always answered.

(A remarkable seance given to four hundred people at Haslet Park, something never before attempted by any medium; his first and last attempt of this kind.)

In the early part of Jim's mediumship, the managers of the Spiritualist camp meeting at Haslet Park, Michigan, near Lansing, invited Jim to come to the meeting. When he arrived there he was besieged on all sides for sittings. He told them that there was only one way to give them all sittings, and that was to give it on the rostrum at the Auditorium. He spoke to the managers about it, and told them he did not know if he would get anything or not, that a sitting of this kind was out of the ordinary, and results might be very uncertain, but that he was willing to do anything for the good of the cause. The managers thought he ought to make a charge and give a percentage to the Society; many wanted Jim to charge a dollar for each person. Jim replied that the phenomena that he was able to produce was as free as the Grace of God to the people. (This shows that Jim wanted to give this great truth to the people without money or price.) The managers acquiesced, and preparations were made for the sitting that evening. A

cabinet was built on the rostrum, the time arrived for the sitting; four hundred people were in attendance.

Jim got upon the rostrum and stated that he had never attempted to give a sitting to so many people, and he did not know what the results would be; that he was a stranger to the most of the people at the camp, and that he desired a committee to be appointed to conduct the sitting to see that everything was straight and genuine if we did get manifestations. The committee was formed; they took Jim to an anteroom, stripped him to see if he had any extra suits, wigs, etc., about his person, and reported to the audience that Farmer Riley goes into the cabinet with nothing on but the suit of clothes you see him wearing, and that there is nothing in the cabinet except the chair which he sits on. They also said that they would guard the cabinet on the outside to see that no one went into the cabinet.

Jim entered the cabinet, the curtain was pulled down, and singing commenced by the audience. In a few minutes the form of Mr. Haslet appeared. He was the gentleman who donated the park, and who was the president of the Association for a number of years. The audience was electrified, overjoyed, to behold their former president who was held in the highest esteem. Mr. Haslet bowed to the audience and entered the cabinet. A great many more forms materialized, and all were recognized by those in the audience. The seance was a grand success. Jim remained in camp for two weeks, giving sittings with wonderful results.

Mr. Benton must be thoroughly posted, for he evidently would not have let Jim attempt giving a seance

to so large a number of sitters if he had not known just what would be the outcome; but he knew that in Jim he had a strong medium. My acquaintance with Mr. Benton has now been for twenty years. He is a fine looking man, is intelligent and upright, and all messages received from him are courteous and dignified.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An Interesting Time With J. B. Hagerman—An Anti-Spiritualist Posing as a Medium and Finally Denounced by the Ministers of Marcellus—The Soul is the Man—There is a Spiritual Body.

About sixteen years ago, J. B. Hagermann came to Marcellus in the interest of himself and church. He claimed to be a medium, and yet stated that the whole thing was a fraud. He went out to Jim's, had two sittings thinking he could detect Jim in some fraudulent work. After the first sitting, Hagermann said to Mr. Riley, "I will come back to-morrow night and will settle for both sittings." (He, Hagermann, knew he was not coming to Riley's the next evening, for on that evening he was going to lecture and tell the dear people what a fraud and fake Spiritualistic manifestations were.) Hagermann remarked after the sitting that the manifestations were the best he had ever seen.

The next evening the U. B. Church was filled to overflowing with church-members and Spiritualists, church-members predominating. The church-members were banded together to down Jim, from the fact that the church-members were attending his seances, and something had to be done to stop it. C. V. Wyland was the leading minister in the fight against Jim. Hagerman in

his discourse stated that he would forfeit five hundred dollars if he could not produce what Riley did. Mr. Goodrich, a leading Spiritualist, got up in the meeting and challenged him to make good what he claimed; it was getting warm. Mr. Goodrich arose and said to Hagerman, "You had a sitting with Mr. Riley and did not pay for it." Hagerman replied, "I will give him one hundred dollars if he will accept pay for that sitting, (thinking Jim would be afraid of a Blue Law by which mediums are fined if they accept pay). Let Mr. Riley present his bill."

One of the Spiritualists jumped in his buggy and drove rapidly out to Jim's, received the bill, came back to the meeting and presented it to Hagerman. He said he wanted Mr. Riley to present the bill in person. The Spiritualist replied, "We will have him do so to-morrow." Mr. Goodrich asked Hagerman if he would debate the question with one of their speakers. Mr. Hagerman replied that he certainly would. Mr. Goodrich telegraphed for L. V. Moulton of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who reached Marcellus the next evening at eight o'clock, Mr. Goodrich having met him at Schoolcraft with a team to drive to Marcellus. When they entered the church, which was filled with church-members and Spiritualists again, Mr. Goodrich introduced Mr. Moulton to Hagerman. He was not polite enough to ask Mr. Moulton to sit on the platform, and said, "This is our meeting." Mr. Moulton took his seat among the audience and took notes, as he proposed answering Hagerman the next evening.

Hagerman delivered an abusive lecture and made

statements he knew he could not substantiate. Mr. Moulton quietly took notes. At the close of the meeting, Rev. Mr. Wyland announced that at the meeting for the next evening, Mr. Moulton would answer Mr. Hagerman. He wanted to see fair play. The next evening Mr. Goodrich was in the chair as chairman, when Hagerman and the ministers filed in. Mr. Goodrich said to Mr. Moulton, "Shall we invite them to the platform?" Mr. Moulton replied, "Certainly, invite them to the platform." Hagerman took his seat immediately behind Mr. Moulton, who is not only an able speaker, but a lawyer and a medium. Moulton quoted a passage of Scripture. One of the ministers jumped up and said, "I would like you to show me that passage." Moulton said, "You sit down; this is our night." Then he turned to the audience and gave the chapter and verse, so they could find it. This made the minister wrathful. Moulton said to Hagerman, "You know that Spiritualism is true. Because you are such an inferior medium, it does not stand to reason that all mediums are like you." He scored him good, and he sat there like a whipped cur and never said a word. The ministers were beginning to get their eyes open.

Jim came in with his bill against Hagerman, but Hagerman could not be found. Later on he met Mr. Wyland and the other ministers. He said to them, that he wanted to present his bill to Hagerman as he had been informed that Hagerman said he would give him one hundred dollars if he would present the bill. The entire party went to the place where Hagerman was stopping; one of the ministers called him out. He said, "Why,

how do you do, Mr. Riley." Jim said, "I am here to present the bill for the sitting." Hagerman said, "Let me see it; it might not be written right. I will give it back to you." Jim said, "I would not trust such a man. I don't think you have one hundred cents." The ministers then spoke up. They saw that Hagerman had completely backed down; he could not make good his proposition. They said, "We know Mr. Riley to be an honest man, and he wants to do right. You have not acted honorably in this matter and we denounce you and want nothing more to do with you." Hagerman left town and has never returned to Marcellus.

Rev. Wyland asked Jim to give him a sitting. He complied, and got good results. He told his congregation what he had seen at Riley's and said it was wonderful. He saw things he could not explain. He gave up the ministry and went to practicing law. No more efforts were made to down Jim, and I can safely say that three fourths of the people in Marcellus and vicinity are Spiritualists.

The soul is the man. There is a spiritual body.

"If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." Corinthians XV:44. Revised Version.

"I hold to be scientifically and positively demonstrated that there resides in man a perceptive, individualized intelligence which is not dependent upon the physical body for its existence or manifestations. I also hold it to be demonstrated by the reproduction of the body to physical perception both spontaneously and by intent and in both the waking and sleeping states that there is a spiritual as well as a physical body, as declared

by St. Paul in the quotation, standing at the head of this article. This spiritual body is the counterpart of the physical, and may be considered as the spiritual tenement of the soul. That the soul of man is his conscious individuality, his ego, his life; that from it proceeds his thoughts, his desires, his affections, his emotions, everything that distinguishes and differentiates him from inanimate matter, is clearly demonstrated by the mental phenomena of everyday life, when considered in connection with the hypothesis herein set forth, and with the phenomena in evidence."

"Studies of childhood prove that the infant perceives its hands, its feet, and every part of its physical body as something external to itself and its consciousness. Later in life we come to regard our bodies in a somewhat different light; but who, even by the supremest effort of will can force his consciousness to regard his physical person as a whole or any part of it as himself—his ego? A man can think of 'my brain,' 'my heart,' 'my eyes,' and of all 'my parts' and organs, but when he thinks or speaks of 'myself,' intuitively he recognizes his ego as something not material. It is true that by reason of the transformation of the primary consciousness of the soul into physical consciousness through the organs of the physical body, we come to regard our mental powers as hedged in by the physical environment; and so they are, to a large extent, while the soul remains in the body."

"Accepting the hypothesis and the fact that the soul is not dependent on the body, while the body is inert matter without it, all mental and physical phenomena

are perfectly accounted for. This hypothesis brings order, system, and simplicity into the realms of spirit mind and matter, and renders it possible for man to comprehend what he is as an individual, and what his relations to the Creator and all things are. The body is the engine; the physical mind is the governor which regulates and controls it; the soul is the steam which operates both engine and governor."

—From "Science of the Soul."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

An Unexpected Seance—Spirit Artist Comes Back to Earth and Continues His Work—A Poem—Address to the Reader—Is Spiritualism a Fraud—Never an Evil Spirit—Low and Underdeveloped Spirits.

On the evening of August 17th, 1909, Mrs. Hotop of the American House, of Kalamazoo, and Miss McMahon reached Jim's home and desired a sitting. Jim informed them that he was not giving any sittings for the public at this time, under instruction from Mr. Benton on account of concentrating and reserving the forces for an article for the book now being written. "But," he said, "you have gone to so much trouble to come here, I do not wish to disappoint you; we will try and get something for you." (It is hard for Jim to refuse anyone a seance.)

At 9 P. M. Jim entered the cabinet; in a few moments we heard the writing going on the slates, and we received the following messages: "Brother we are very sorry, but we must disappoint these ladies some as we do not wish to use the medium's force much until after to-morrow."

John Benton.

This showed that Mr. Benton also did not want to disappoint them, but from the way the message read, the sitting would be short. Jim did not leave the cabinet.

I dropped the curtain and arranged the folds at the bottom, and had just straightened up, when the curtains parted, and there stood the form of Fred Hotop, the husband of Mrs. Hotop, he having passed over about two years ago. Five other forms materialized, among them Will Webster, who had appeared at our last sitting. We concluded that he was evidently coming for some purpose. What it was we do not know.

A form appeared for Miss McMahan, but she was so nervous and excited she could not talk to it. The curtain was raised. In ten minutes Jim re-entered the cabinet, and shortly the slates were handed out, one for Mrs. Hotop with a long message. The nature of it was principally business, regarding the hotel, which cannot be stated here, and which was entirely satisfactory to her, what she came for. The other message was to the writer and read as follows: "My dear subject:—We have our work at hand and will be on hand at nine, sharp, to-morrow. Good night, as the forces are exhausted."

Dr. Powell.

New York, July 1st, 1909.

A noted artist passed to the other life, returned, and through another person continues his work on earth.

The strange story of the spirit of a dead artist taking possession of the mind of a living man and impelling him to carry on the artist's unfinished work is related by Prof. James H. Hyslop, President of the American Society for Psychical Research, who, in connection with Prof. Isaac K. Funk recently came to the conclusion that the spirit of man lives after his body is dead.

Robert Swain Gifford, the artist in question, died in 1905 at his summer home near New Bedford, Massachusetts. Frederick L. Thompson, a goldsmith, had met Gifford only twice, and knew him but slightly. Thompson had never indicated any ability as an artist until six months after the death of Gifford, when he did not even know that Gifford had died. He was suddenly seized with an impulse to paint a picture, and going to work on it, he was surprised at his ability. While he was painting, the voice of Gifford seemed to tell him to continue the work he had started. Thompson continued painting, always obsessed by the spirit of Gifford, and found a ready market for them, many purchasers commenting on their similarity to Gifford's paintings.

Fearing that his mind was giving way, in 1907, Thompson called on Hyslop. By arrangement he made several sketches for pictures at the instance of what he considered to be Gifford's spirit. Hyslop locked these up in a safe and then Thompson went to New Bedford and called on Gifford's widow, where he had never been, and whom he had never met. One of the first things Mrs. Gifford showed him was a sketch which Gifford had made a short time before his death, and which had been locked up and seen by no one until a few days before Thompson's call. The sketch was exactly similar in every detail to one of the sketches Thompson had left with Hyslop. This fact, and equally surprising features in the case prompted Hyslop to even a stronger belief that the spirit lives after death, and that the artist Gifford's spirit finds communication with this world through the medium of Thompson.

A poem. Address to the Reader. Is Spiritualism a Fraud? Never have seen an absolute evil spirit. Low and undeveloped spirits.

Oh, if I could some truth impart,
To reach some sin-sick, sorrowing heart,
And lead them up truth's shining way,
Where loving angels ever stay,
Until they'd rise above all wrong
And with us sing progression's song,
For them we'd open wide the door
That they life's beauties might explore.
And when they'd entered there within,
The Holy temple free from sin,
We'd strike life's harp strings quick and strong
And sing for them redemption's song.
And when our song their being thrilled,
With love divine their souls would fill;
Oh, then we'd take them by the hand,
And welcome them to spirit land.

“Dear reader, are you one who has as yet never been interested in Spiritualism enough to give it a thorough investigation, and to-day can you say you know nothing of it? If so, you have thus far in your life been feeding upon husks, while the germ of truth has escaped your notice. If you think, dear reader, that Spiritualism is a fraud or a humbug, we earnestly entreat you as a lover of humanity to investigate it and expose whatever there is of fraud or humbug about it, but do not deny the facts. Your cry of fraud, or humbug, before you

have given the subject a thorough investigation, amounts to nothing. For any person's opinion, in regard to any subject of which they know nothing, is entirely worthless. Is Spiritualism a fraud? You, dear reader, are a spirit entity, yourself, only clothed with a material covering that is, for the time being, the medium through which you express yourself, and through the same medium you receive the expression of others. Are you, dear reader, a fraud, a humbug? You certainly are, if Spiritualism is such. And so is all there is to life; for all the material universe is but the expression of the invisible or spiritual force that moves and controls all things. Oh no, kind reader, you are not a humbug, neither is Spiritualism. You are a grand individualization from the infinite spirit of life. And Spiritualism is the law and result of the boundless and infinite ocean of life, from which you were individualized. Hence, you, kind reader, are a part of the phenomena of Spiritualism."

"Spiritualism, in its broadest sense, means the boundless universe of life, and the science of Spiritualism is the science of life in every department of life. Hence, dear friend, the phrase or expression that demonstrates a channel of communication between spirits, occupying a material form in earth life, and the spirits in spirit life, is only a speck of truth, as it were, in the boundless sea of spirituality. And yet this speck of knowledge that demonstrates a future existence for mankind, when the cares and trials, and the temptations of this life are over, is the grandest revelation ever yet given to man on this earth plane of existence."

“Oh, yes, kind reader, you are a speck of life, plucked from the infinite ocean of life, with an immortal inheritance destined to live on and on forever, and forever be able to learn more and more of life’s lessons; forever climbing higher and higher up the mount of progress, where, sometime in the great future that lies before you, you may serenely stand,

‘High up on the mountain-side,
And view this dark world o’er,
When sin and sorrow, pain and woe,
Will be felt and feared no more.’”

“Kind reader, that prophecy will be literally fulfilled sometime in the future. But not until knowledge has covered the earth as the waters cover the sea; but for that time we shall labor. Kind reader, will you labor with us? Is there enough in Spiritualism to enlist your earnest co-operation? Spiritualism is the Alpha and Omega of life, the truth of all truths, the science of all sciences, the harbinger of all knowledge, and the grand and glorious fruition of all progress and unfoldment. Then come, dear reader, why feast ye upon the husks of a barren field, while the golden fruit of life’s harvest hangs all around your pathway? That golden fruit of knowledge clusters in rich and luscious pearls of thought upon every branch and twig of the tree of life. We have only been able to gather and present to you in this article a few of the leaflets of thought from this grand old tree. If you would taste its fruit, you must reach forth your own hand, and gather it for yourself. No man or angel can gather it for you.”

“It’s yours to take, or yours to shun,
And may your choice be a noble one,
May you pluck the fruit from the grand old tree,
And thus in time much wiser be.”

“Dear reader, when ignorance or bigotry tells you that Spiritualism is a fraud or humbug, you may *know* that they know nothing of the subject, or else they are falsifiers. When the priesthood tells you it is a satanic delusion, you may look for his Satanic Majesty among the people who know him so well, for Spiritualism and Spiritualists know nothing of that personage who has been, and is, so far-famed among the clergy of the past and present time. Some people appear to *know* all about him and his movements. Well, perhaps, *they* do, and are well acquainted with that noted personage, if *person* he is. But as for *us*, *we know him not*. Indeed, we know of no such thing or being as an absolute evil spirit. We know of low and undeveloped spirits; of spirits individualized, and born, and educated under low and very inharmonious conditions, who have not yet arisen above a low, selfish and inharmonious plane of life, and it is for such spirits that we work, and through progressive unfoldment, raise them to a higher plane of life. All the human spiritual beings that we know anything of, are capable of becoming unfolded to a plane of thought, where they can become comparatively wise and useful members of society, either in earth or spirit life.”

“Again, if the great and infinite spirit of all life is good, as reason teaches us it is, through an investigation of the phenomena of life, then, of course, all individ-

ualized spirit entities are but drops, as it were, of the great infinite spirit. Then it follows as a logical fact, that there can not be such an entity in existence as an evil spirit, and to claim there is, is either to denounce the great spirit of all life as an evil spirit, or else admit that the Great Spirit is only a finite power, and that another evil spirit, called the devil, can and does exist outside of the spirit of all life, which we claim fills immensity, and either of these propositions to us is unreasonable, illogical and false. No, kind reader, in our few years of life in earth and spirit life, we have never seen a personal God, or a devil, of whom we hear so much during our short career in earth life, but we have seen humanity in many of the various vicissitudes and conditions in life, and we love humanity, and for it we will labor until progress shall unfold their minds to arise higher and above all the false gods that have ever been worshiped, and all the imaginary devils that have ever found lodgment in an undeveloped mind. And here a love for humanity, and a love for truth which should and must be penned, compels me to write what I sincerely believe to be true, that all the gods who have ever been found, are but creations of the human mind, created therein when a lack of understanding the laws of life, and life's forces by the human mind, caused those imaginary monsters to find lodgment in the mind of man; and then by the holy sanctity flung around them by their adherents, those ideas have been passed down the ages, until the present period of time finds them unobliterated, yet somewhat modified."

"I am aware that those remarks won't be well relished

by some of those in earth life, who claim to belong to the advance army of progress, but I cannot help that, I must write as I see it; I am no sycophant, neither do I speak or write to please, but to utter truth. I work for humanity, with a desire to do it good; to bless them with truth, though it may now be unpopular, rather than to curse humanity with error, and receive the applause of the multitude. I see the inconsistency of the popular theories, and the sooner error is eradicated from the mind of man, and the truth supply the demand of the human mind instead of error, the faster mankind will move onward and upward in the pathway of human unfoldment."

(Leaflets of thought gathered from the Tree of Life.)

CHAPTER XXIX.

An Extraordinary Seance—Good Thoughts and Harmony—An Address to the Readers of This Book by the Spirit of Dr. Powell, John Benton and Others—Message to Mrs. Riley and Jim From His Mother—Materialization of Forms—A Spirit Carries the Music Box Weighing $18\frac{1}{2}$ Pounds Out of the Cabinet to the Writer—Good Night.

August 18th, 1909.

Following the instructions received, at a former sitting, from Dr. Powell and Mr. Benton, to sit at nine P. M. sharp, Jim entered the cabinet promptly as the clock struck nine. I placed four slates on the bed, feeling assured that we would receive lengthy messages; I placed the music box also on the bed, thinking perhaps they would wind it up and have some music, as they frequently do. We all felt that we were going to have a seance out of the ordinary. We sang about ten minutes when the slates were seemingly pushed off the bed to the floor, making considerable noise as they struck the floor. Our supposition was that handing them through the aperture of the curtains uses up a certain amount of force, and this was saved by simply throwing them off the bed.

The curtain was thrown back and we found the four slates, written full. The slates were numbered one, two, three and four, containing the following message:

"Friends, and loved ones in spirit with us,—To-night we are assembled here for the purpose of communion, with each other, and we wish to quicken the soul forces of Brother V——— so after he leaves here, we can inspire his thoughts for the latter end of our book, so it will reach the soul of its readers and bring peace, consolation and love into their lives. We are happy to find so much harmony here to-night, both on the mundane and spiritual plane. We find we must work our medium slowly and carefully, as we have much work to perform before we bid you good night; so be patient, and at midnight all have a cup of coffee, so with our blessings we will now let the medium rest a short time."

(Signed) Powell, Benton and others.

This sitting lasted thirty minutes. Jim rested perhaps fifteen minutes and then entered the cabinet. We shortly heard them writing and in ten minutes, Jim asked to have the curtain raised, and we received the following message: "We are very thankful for the good thoughts our medium is sending out to us, also for the good thoughts we receive from you all. Our medie came back in here a few moments too quickly."

After thirty minutes, Jim returned to the cabinet. We sang for about twenty minutes, when the signal was given that the slates were ready, and the following was received:

"This book we dedicate to the thinking public. Study its pages carefully, honestly; do not condemn it until read, then you will not feel like condemning, but bless the writer for bringing the glad tidings. Man lives, and has a conscious existence after the change, called death.

Yes, dear reader, there is no death; if you could only see the number of happy souls here to-night as we mingle with the blessed ones on the mundane sphere."

Jim rested another thirty minutes and entered the cabinet again; within ten minutes we could hear them writing, and within fifteen minutes we were notified they were through writing. The following message was for the writer: My subject,—I will stay with you — until your work is done. Please make and drink your coffee before the medium returns in here; we will need all his strength before morning."

(Signed) Dr. Powell.

The following message was received by Mrs. Riley and Jim: "My darling loved children,—I come to you to-night with a mother's love and greeting. We have met here as you of the earth plane meet to a reunion. Clara, my daughter, please thank these kind, good people in your home for paving the way for you and my dear son, James, to live a more quiet life, free from worry and care. I must not occupy too much of this valuable time for the wise ones are here. We all send love and blessing."

(Signed) Mother Rachel Riley.

Lunch was ready about 12:30 A. M. After lunch, about 1:00 A. M., Jim entered the cabinet and asked me to take his hand a moment; I dropped the curtains and as usual arranged them at the bottom to exclude all light, which did not occupy over five seconds. I straightened up, and there stood the form of Dr. Carpenter, one of his controls; he patted me on the head and bowed to the sitters, then disappeared, and immediately Mr. Ben-

ton appeared, attired in a black suit, low cut vest, white shirt front, collar and black necktie, and said: "Good evening, friends," and bowed. We bid him good evening, and he disappeared. I asked him to come again, saying to him, "I am glad to meet you again." He appeared again, bowing. (I will state here that Mr. Benton is a tall man; his height is six feet, one inch.) Within two minutes another form appeared, short and stout, and having the music box in his hands. He walked out of the cabinet, the writer jumped up and met him and took it from his hands. He bowed to the sitters and re-entered the cabinet. The music box weighs eighteen and one-half pounds. This would seem improbable to a skeptic, but thousands who have attended Jim's sittings will verify what is stated here, not only regarding the music box, but all other manifestations that are produced through Jim's mediumship.

Mrs. Riley had placed a bouquet of flowers on the bed; her father's hand appeared in the opening of the curtains with the bouquet. (Her father lost the first finger on his hand and the second finger is crooked; the hand is always shown in that condition.) I presume he does this so that she may be sure to know he is her father. Signal was given that the sitting was over, and on a slate was written, "Dear ones,—We have decided that you have received as much as you can digest, so good night." Benton.

The writing of Mr. Benton, Dr. Powell, and Jim's mother was all different. This sitting was superior to any other we have had. The forms were distinct in a good light. When we told Jim what we had received,

in materializations and about the spirit carrying the music box, he said he would give a great deal to see it; but of course, he cannot see the phenomena that are produced through his own mediumship. Jim must have a wonderful constitution to stand this work for so many years, for there is no question, it draws strongly on his vitality. He informs me that in the year 1892, he gave 368 sittings, having given some sittings during the day; a wonderful record; some of the sittings lasted far into the night.

CHAPTER XXX.

Christianity and Spiritualism Contrasted—A Mental Glimpse of the Toilers Ascending the Mount of Progress—What I Have Not Seen, and What I Have Seen—Our Watch Fires are Burning—The Redemption of Mankind—The Law of Heredity—Advice to All by a Noted Writer in Spirit Life.

“The basis of Spiritualism is the phenomena and science of life. The phenomena and science of life removes the foundation of Christianity, for it demonstrates that the fall of man through Adam was a myth and had no foundation in fact. It also proves that the atonement through the blood of Jesus Christ is another myth, and has no real foundation in truth. Spiritualism teaches that knowledge that leads mankind to cease to do evil and learn to do good, is the only and true saviour of the human race from the effects of wrong deeds; that each one must atone for his own wrong deeds by suffering the penalty attached thereto through nature’s laws. Those two systems are as diametrically opposite as any opposites in the chemistry of matter. And yet, that artful foe of progress that exists in spirit life seeks to blind those who can be blinded; and even some noted speakers upon the spiritual rostrum, in their sensitive condition are sometimes made to utter sentiments favorable to such a union.”

“Friends of human progress in earth life: Let one who has for many years been an earnest worker for the elevation of the human race through the unfoldment of mind in earth and spirit life, be allowed to give you a word of warning. Spiritualism is the grandest and the highest truth that has ever been revealed to mankind on earth. It is a truth that does not need to be bolstered up by Christianity, or led by the artful cunning of the priesthood in earth or spirit life. Let it stand alone, and stand or fall on its merits or demerits. All the religions of the past or present have been and are based upon belief that is undemonstrable, while Spiritualism, which is the science of life, is capable of demonstration. Spiritualism to us is not a religion; it is the science of life that, in the human heart will *more* than fill all the demands of man’s nature that religion can fill. While religion has only supplied *belief* to satisfy the demands of the human soul, Spiritualism brings a knowledge from the facts and phenomena of life.”

“Through the past in the religious world, mankind has suffered and sorrowed. Religion came to them as a hope to assuage their sorrows, and through *belief* pointed them to a brighter day in the future. To-day, mankind suffers and sorrows, but spiritual science brings to them a knowledge of life. It not only *proves* to them a brighter and happier day in the future, but it teaches them the laws of life that must be obeyed if we would be happy. Our friend whom we respect and love passes through what is called death; and as we sit silently by the casket that contains the cold and lifeless form of the one we love so dearly, religion comes to us and tells us,

'Your loved and loving friend has gone to that bourne from which no traveler returns. If your loved friend had sufficient faith in the atoning blood of Jesus, probably the gate of Heaven was opened and your friend entered therein; but if that faith was lacking, and the robes of your friend had not been made white in the blood of the Lamb, why then, of course, your friend has gone to the other place from which there is no redemption, and where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' And this theory is called the consolation that *religion* offers to a poor, grief-stricken, mourning heart."

"But what of the science of life, or Spiritualism; has it no better consolation to offer the poor, grief-stricken heart? Oh yes, it has. The science of life, which is Spiritualism, tells me as I sit by the cold and lifeless form of my dearly loved friend, 'Your friend is not dead, neither gone to a bourne from which no traveler returns; but, though the spirit has withdrawn from the casket of clay, your friend stands by your side; still lives, and loves you still; that there is no angry, vindictive God who will consign your friend to an eternal hell; no Jesus in whom you must have implicit faith, to be happy. But your dear friend is a child of nature infinite in possibility, and born according to nature's laws with an inheritance of life everlasting. That your friend is born a progressive being; that outside the law of progress is the keynote that moves all things onward, towards higher conditions of life. Yes, more than all that, it teaches and demonstrates the truth that your friend can still communicate with you. And more than that, it teaches

and demonstrates the truth that under certain conditions, your friend can take on a material form, that you can clasp the hand of that friend, and that you can exchange the kiss of affection as you did in days of yore, when your friend was with you here upon this cold and dark earth shore.' And this is a *little* consolation that Spiritualism brings to the *poor* mourning heart. It is the consolation that knowledge imparts; that robs death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. A consolation that a belief in all religions combined cannot impart. And this grand and glorious consolation is the fruition of the science of life, as expressed through Spiritualism. It is above all religions; for it is a truth that has been and can again be demonstrated."

"Friends of progress, do not belittle this grand truth, the science of all life, by terming it a religion. It is *not* a religion, but a science that can and does fill the human soul with more true joy, than all the religions of which earth can boast. And when a human soul is truly baptized in the divine fountain of this science, they *need no religion*, for the demands of their divine natures are supplied from the living fountain of spiritual truth."

"Again, dear friend, you, who are journeying in the pathway of life, seeking more light and more truth, do not attach the grand science of Spiritualism to the blood-stained car of the Christian religion. If you do, you by so doing will retard the progress of the human race for many years. But it cannot be stopped; it may for a time be checked, but it will surely succeed; for the power that is moving onward, the mighty car of progress, is greater than all the combined powers of its deadliest

foes. Dear pilgrim, in earth life, we have not given a detailed history of our labors in spirit life science the few first years of our sojourn among the immortals, for that would occupy too much time and space; our present purpose is only to impart to the reader some of the movements among the inhabitants of the spirit life, and something of the connecting chain between earth and the spirit land, together with some of the underlying principles of human life and human unfoldment in the boundless universe of infinite life."

"But I desire to here remark that, for more than half a century that I have dwelt in spirit life, I have labored hard and earnestly for the elevation and unfoldment of the human race, both in earth and spirit life; and I expect to labor for the elevation of myself and others until humanity in earth and spirit life shall stand upon a higher plane of unfoldment than they now occupy. Yea, more than this. As I look out into the vast realms of infinite space and behold the innumerable worlds therein displayed, as I reflect upon the infinite sea of wisdom that is outstretched before me, the waters of which I have never yet tasted; as I behold the mountains of knowledge that arise so grand and majestic before me; as I behold so many of the wise and noble sages in spirit life (whose shoe laces I am yet unworthy to unloose), toiling up the rugged mount of progress, the summit of which can never be reached, for it has no summit; when I realize that millions of human, thinking, intelligent, loving, kind, and noble men and women are far in advance of me in ascending the grand old mountain; and when I know that those in advance are ever extending a

helping hand to those beneath them; and when I contemplate that I am an immortal being, and possess within my individuality infinite possibilities, and that to progress there are no bounds; oh then, dear pilgrims in earth life, I expect to be toiling up the grand old mount of progress while the infinite ages of eternity shall roll their ceaseless rounds."

"Kind reader, will you accompany me in this grand and glorious journey? Will you lay off all bad habits, if you have any; discard all false creeds; and with your vision fixed steadily and firmly upon the truths of life, clasp hands with us and let us climb the mount of progress together? The wisdom you can gather will be a light to guide your weary footsteps while you remain in earth life, and a diadem to adorn your brow in spirit life that will grow brighter and brighter for ages after the priests have been disrobed, and the crowns of earthly monarchs have crumbled to decay."

"But we must return to our narrative. During all those years that I have passed in spirit life, I have not seen a personal god sitting upon a golden throne, with Jesus at his right hand, ready to judge the quick and the dead; neither have I seen the throne we read of in the Bible. But I have seen the expressions of the quickening spirit of life that pulsates through the boundless universe of matter and spirit. I have seen many noble souls of both sexes in spirit life, whose whole visage bespoke the grand power of goodness, wisdom, truth, and love; who had, through many years of struggle, toil, and temptation in earth and spirit life, succeeded in conquering all their selfish desires and animal passions, and

had thus through the law of progress, reached a condition in life that is far superior to the imaginary condition of the saints, singing around a golden throne. Though I have not seen the crown placed upon the brow of a God, I have seen the crown of reason and intelligence sparkling upon the brow of many pilgrims of the better way as they were climbing progression's mountain, seeking to know more of life and its mysteries."

"Though I have never seen Jesus Christ, I have seen many loving and noble souls whose undying love for humanity and truth has caused them for years to wear a crown of persecution, if not thorns, placed upon their brow by an ignorant and superstitious multitude, who claimed to be followers of Jesus, but who, we thought, came nearer being the followers of his persecutors. I have never seen the devil, that arch-fiend of the fiery regions, of whom we have read so much in the Bible, and of whom so much has been said in the pulpits on earth; but I have seen expressed through the undeveloped spiritual powers of humanity, all phases of animal life. I have seen in the human form, expressions of the wolf from the forest, the bear from the mountains, the tiger and lion from the jungles of the wilderness, the serpent and the dove all manifested or expressed in the human form. To bring all those fierce animal passions under the subjection of love and wisdom, is our mission, and the mission of Spiritualism. To cause the lion of the fierce passion, and the lamb of innocence and peace, to lie down together in harmony in the breast of man, is our mission. Can we do it? We have done

it, and what has been done, can be done again; wisdom, truth, and love combined, if mixed in the proper proportions and fed judiciously, will educate and tame the wildest animal passions that ever wrangled in the human breast. We have seen the lion and tiger of passion in man's breast tearing at the very vitals of the human heart, and we have seen wisdom, truth, and love subdue those ferocious beasts, and a little child could lead them in the pathway of progress that leads to higher fields of wisdom."

"It is more wisdom, truth, and love that humanity needs to move it upward in the pathway of progress. Mankind has long been searching for wisdom and truth in the musty records of the bygone ages, and has only succeeded in bringing to light false theories of a false and idol God, created in the minds of men in the dark ages of the past, when heathen mythology ruled the ignorant masses of mankind. And at that period of time, love for the great mass of humanity was almost an unknown qualification of the human heart on earth; but to-day, the advanced minds on earth and in spirit life, are seeking for light and knowledge where it is to be found in the storehouse of all knowledge—the phenomena of life."

"Forty-one years have hardly passed and gone since the spiritual battery was first openly established on earth, that by the raps was opened a line of communication between friends on earth and friends in spirit life. And lo! what a change! Although those minds in spirit life, having the movement in charge, dare not let the light from their spirit spheres shine but dimly, for a flood

of light from the higher life at first would have dazzled minds in earth life, only to blind them. Hence, it was necessary to move slowly and cautiously at first, but steadily has the work moved onward. Our watchfires have been kept burning, until we now have a light upon almost every hilltop and valley in all the enlightened nations of the earth. Millions in earth life have seen the light, and rejoice in a knowledge of spiritual intercourse."

"Yea, more. Millions have met their friends face to face, whom they had mourned as dead; have clasped them by the hand, talked with them and exchanged the kiss of affection as in the long ago; and with hearts overflowing with gratitude, they bless the day and the power that brought this glorious truth to earth's inhabitants. And the rejoicing has by no means all been among the people on earth. In spirit life the joy has been at least equally as great, for there were millions in spirit life who rejoiced because they could tell their friends in earth life that they still lived and still loved them as in former times. Thus spirit communion is established on earth as a fixed fact, and those who now oppose it so strongly are the ignorant and prejudiced, or those who have not cared to earnestly investigate the phenomena."

"But, although so much has been accomplished during the last forty years, there is yet a great work to do. When we look over the earth, and behold the dark and unhappy conditions of the human race, our hearts would almost sink in despair were it not that the star of progress shines so radiantly for all mankind, and did we not know that there is a vast army of good and true

workers in spirit life, with their army of co-workers in earth life, who will never desert the work until mankind is redeemed from ignorance, sorrow, crime, and the vast horde of unfortunates whose unhappy conditions surround them to-day."

"In Christian countries mankind has been waiting and praying for nearly two thousand years for redemption through Jesus Christ, and praying to God to do that which belonged to themselves to do. If mankind in earth life is never redeemed until Jesus redeems them, they will never be redeemed. So long as the masses of mankind in earth life depend upon Jesus or any one else to become their scapegoat, or to bear the penalty for their wrong deeds, so long will mankind be cursed with crime and its innumerable evils. The only redemption for mankind is a knowledge that will unfold the mind of man morally, intellectually, and spiritually; that will raise him above the plane of life where he now stands; that will conquer those animal passions that now live, thrive and wrangle in his breast, and cause the immortal flower of love for all humanity to blossom therein, thus crowning man's every effort for good."

"When I look far up the mountain of progress and behold those noble souls who have struggled for years in the dark pathways of earth life, ignorant of life and its mysteries, who, by earnest effort on their part, have risen above all those dark and false creeds of earth, and can now quaff the waters of knowledge from the river of life, and taste the luscious fruit that is plucked from the tree of life that puts forth its leaves, its blossoms, and its fruit of wisdom for the healing of the nations;

when I see them using their earnest effort to lead mankind in the path of progress, my heart becomes fired with a stronger zeal and I renew my pledge to continue to labor for the good of all mankind. But, perhaps, kind reader, you would ask what course is now proposed by the spirits in higher life to pursue? We answer: 'In the realms of spirit manifestations it will be the same, only there will be an increase of power during the next decade, and thousands of earth's inhabitants will receive and rejoice in a knowledge of spirit communion. Gradually those minds will unfold their power of thought and reason, and thus arise above all those erroneous creeds of past ages, for truth must take the place of error, before mankind can be free to climb progression's mount. Of course, those organized enemies of our cause in spirit life, will not yet cease their efforts, but they will not control all the spiritual speakers, though they hold too strong an influence over some.' "

"The intellectual, the moral, the social, the religious, the political, and the spiritual conditions of mankind in earth life, all need to be governed more by the power of wisdom and justice than they now are, before the masses of mankind can enjoy the happy privilege of rising to a plane above evil and vice. All those conditions of human unfoldment will be carefully guarded by those in spirit life, and as fast as possible the people on earth will be educated to arise above all wrong in every condition of life. And all this will have to be accomplished through the growth and unfoldment of the human mind. But the most we can do is to lead all those minds that we can control, and influence them to exercise their influence to lead others to abandon all

error, all evil, all injustice, and seek to know the truth and do good, not evil."

"Then there is another natural law, the science of which it is very important that mankind should better understand than they do now. It is the natural law of heredity. There is not anything more true in the realms of life, than that children inherit from their parents, and conditions surrounding the mother previous to the birth of the child, many of the angularities and conditions in its organism that in after years cause the child, or man or woman to become a criminal. And the children are thus born because their parents do not understand the law of influences that surround the mother and the unborn child; because they were not aware that some little circumstance, in itself of no great importance, might stamp its impress in a deplorable condition upon the individuality of the child that would cause the child untold suffering before it could be overcome. Such an impress has been, and can be stamped upon an unborn offspring that has marred, and can mar the mental ability of the child, and though the child might become a man or woman in earth life, and even remain in the earth form until old age calls it to spirit life, yet those unfortunate prenatal conditions may mar the happiness of the spirit for many years after its transition to spirit life."

"Ye fathers and mothers, ye sons and daughters, in earth life, we entreat you, as one loving humanity, as one who sadly deplores the present condition of social and moral life, that you study and seek to understand the natural heredity transmission of qualities from parent to offspring. Such knowledge may be of more real value to you than all the material wealth of the world,

for a well-formed and well-balanced mind, occupying a well-formed and well-balanced human organism cannot be computed by material wealth; neither can an ill-formed mind be compensated by material wealth. Then seek to understand this law, and never *dare* to become a mother or father until you understand something of this law and its requirements to enable you to produce well-organized and harmonious children; and your children and humanity on earth and in spirit life will bless you for your noble effort."

"And now, kind reader, you who are a pilgrim traveler over the rough and thorny pathway of earth life, as I once was; you who have followed my brief recital of some of my experiences in earth and spirit life, perhaps may catch some of my hopes, some of my aspirations, some of my impatient longings for the advancement and progress of the human race. I sincerely hope you may; and if such be the case, I should feel well recompensed for my labor. But whether such shall be the result or not, let me earnestly entreat you as a friend who loves all humanity with an undying love, to seek for more light, more knowledge; whatever your religious convictions may be, seek earnestly for more light. If you are a believer in the more popular religious creeds of the present time, seek for more light, more knowledge, from nature's living fount of knowledge, for from thence flow the living waters of truth, which are for the healing of the nations."

"Do not let the creeds and the dogmas of the past ages, chain your immortal mind in the dungeon of folly. Throw off the shackles of fear with which you are bound (if you are bound), step forward, join the grand

army of progress ; drink deep from the pure and celestial fountain of wisdom, and then join in the onward march of progress. Be good, virtuous, and true, and you will be happy. Obtain wisdom, and you can advance before kings ; and the crown of good deeds, if justly placed upon your brow, will outdazzle the most brilliant crown that a haughty monarch ever wore."

"If you, dear reader are a Spiritualist, let the grand truth of spiritual intercourse be your light by day, and your guiding star by night ; yet seek for more light, more truth, for infinity is filled with problems of truth that no minds have ever solved. Do not think that to know that you can hold communion with your departed friends, is all of Spiritualism that is necessary for you to know. Far from it ; that is only a glimpse of the ante-room. Beyond that is the grand temple of knowledge, the portals of which are ever open to aspiring minds. Remember, that Spiritualism is the science of life in every department of life, and it is necessary that Spiritualists should enter that grand temple that fills all space, and there learn those higher lessons that lead up the grand pathway of progress, where sages, seeking for more wisdom, have often trod, and whose steps have only left their footprints upon the sands of time. Yea, it is the duty of every Spiritualist to be up and doing."

"For error, with her greedy maw,
Oft strikes truth with her huge paw ;
She fain would crush advancement down,
For fear she'll lose her own false crown."

From "Leaflets of Thought gathered from the Tree of Life."

CHAPTER XXXI

Surgeon W. S. Boyd A Materialist's. Experience—A Great Test and Its Results—A Greater Man Than Grover Cleveland—Sitting Aug. 18th, 1909.

In the year of 1892, W. S. Boyd of Chicago, Illinois, surgeon for several railroads running into Chicago, having heard of Jim's mediumship, decided he would go and see if there was any truth in the reports that he had heard. Mr. Boyd was the owner of one of the largest private libraries in Chicago; he was a reader, a literary man, well educated, well posted, and stood high in his profession. He was also a great traveler.

He reached Jim's house one Saturday evening and stated that he desired to witness the phenomena he had heard so much about. Jim gave him a sitting Saturday night and Sunday night. On Monday morning, when getting ready to leave, he said "Mr. Riley, I am not prepared to call this what you do. I will be back next Saturday." The next Saturday, he arrived with four other gentlemen; they had sittings Saturday and Sunday evening. On Monday morning, Mr. Boyd said, "If this is a trick sleight-of-hand performance, you are better than Keller or Herman; and if you are a magician, why are you working on a farm, when you could travel and give exhibitions, and make a great deal of money? I

reason in this way. If you were a trickster, you would not stay here, for if you are a sleight-of-hand man, you are the best I ever saw, and I have witnessed the best of them. I will be here next Saturday evening, again. I will investigate further."

He came again the next Saturday evening, this time bringing six other gentlemen, and had sittings Saturday and Sunday nights. On Monday morning, he said to Jim, "Riley, I don't know what to think; you have taken the starch all out of me. I will be back again next Saturday." The next Saturday he brought eight people with him had sittings Saturday and Sunday nights. On Monday morning he said, "Mr. Riley," taking Jim's hand, and with tears in his eyes, "my God, is it possible that I have been wrong all these years? I have been a materialist all my life. You have convinced me, without a shadow of a doubt of the Immortality of the Soul. Words cannot express my gratitude to you for so doing. What a grand truth this is; and to think all these years I have been groping in the dark. I thank you from the bottom of my heart that I have found that which brings joy to my heart. When I go back to Chicago, I will go before any court of justice and swear that I have actually seen my father and mother and an old sweetheart. I recognized them as plainly as if I had met them on the streets of Chicago." He bade Jim good-bye, going home rejoicing, and knowing that his dear friends were not dead and that sooner or later he would join them in a world where sickness and sorrow is not known. The Doctor afterwards attended several of Jim's seances in Chicago. Within four or five years after the sittings at Jim's house, he passed to the other life.

At one of the sittings which Dr. Boyd attended, Mr. Clyde Goodrich was present. A spirit form appeared and said his name was Timothy Knox, and that he wanted to communicate with his daughters at Ludington, Michigan, and that he had passed over two years previous at Ludington. He said, "If you will write to the proper authorities, you will find my daughters, and I can communicate with them." Dr. Boyd said that would be a good test. The next day Mr. Goodrich wrote to the Postmaster, asking him if he knew of such a person that had lived there, and had died about two years ago. He received a reply from him, stating that no such person had lived there at that time. At the next sitting, Mr. Goodrich asked Mr. Benton, Jim's control, why he allowed a spirit to come and make a statement so erroneous, and put them to the trouble of writing, etc. The spirit answered the question himself. Timothy Knox wrote on the slate as follows: "When I was on the earth plane, I was considered a truthful man. Please write to the proper authorities, and you will find that I am telling the truth. I am very anxious to communicate with my daughters."

Mr. Goodrich wrote again, this time to the Probate Judge at Ludington, and received a reply that there had at one time lived in the county, a man by the name of Timothy Knox, and that he had died twelve years ago. (You will notice that the spirit had said he had died two years ago. In spirit life, they have no idea of time, and possibly he may not have risen to the higher sphere for a number of years; for only he who has lived on earth the right kind of a life, goes to the home that he

himself has built by good deeds, kind acts, doing unto others that which he would want others to do unto him ; in fact by living the Golden Rule. Do right, live right, and you are all right, regardless of the teachings of priest, pope, or preacher ; but I am digressing.) The Probate Judge said that Timothy Knox had two daughters living in Ludington at that time, and gave their names and addresses. Then Mr. Goodrich wrote to the Judge, thanking him and telling him why he desired the information. The Judge sent Mr. Goodrich's letter to one of the daughters, and she wrote Mr. Goodrich, requesting him to describe the spirit. He sent her a description and a reply came that it was an exact description of her father, and that she was coming to Mr. Riley's at once. The daughter reached Jim's house, stayed four days, saw her father, received a message from him, and went home happy and satisfied of spirit return.

Later on she wrote Jim to come to Ludington and give some sittings ; he went, and stayed there two weeks. While he was stopping at this lady's house, Capt. Reed, proprietor of the Reed House, and who had attended a sitting, came to see Jim one day and wanted him to come and take dinner with him. Jim said that he was much obliged to him, that the dinners he was getting at this lady's were all right, and he was satisfied. Capt. Reed said, "I will get you up a fine dinner ; you can have anything you will order that the season affords. Just name it." Jim replied, "Well, I will take dinner. I would like a nice white fish, broiled." After dinner

Jim was enjoying a good cigar and his curiosity being aroused, asked the Captain what his object was in being so anxious to have him take dinner with him. The Captain replied, "Traveling men frequently bring up the subject of Spiritualism, and invariably your name is mentioned, and incidents are related by some of them which happened at some of your seances. I wanted your name on my register so that I could say you had stopped with me. I would rather have your name on my register, than Grover Cleveland's" (who was President at that time); thus showing in what esteem Jim was held.

Jim gave sittings in Chicago for a great many noted Divines. One of them said, "Mr. Riley, we are not thinking these days as we used to." Their names could be given, but it would not be the proper thing to do. Before they found this truth, they had faith to believe what they preached. Now they have the facts, why do not the ministers who know these facts, give them to their congregations? The scheme of the priests has always been to keep the dear people in ignorance. The Catholic priests know more about spirit phenomena than any other clergy, but they do not inform the members of their churches.

Some eighteen years ago, the writer attended a sitting which four priests attended. They were disguised so that they would not be recognized. This was a trumpet circle, and they held long conversations with priests, I presume, that had passed to the other life.

Jim was telling me about a minister of Cleveland, Ohio, who came to his home, stayed three days, saw and talked with his father, mother, and wife, shed tears, and

was overjoyed at meeting them. During his stay, in their talks the minister said something that displeased Jim. When he was bidding Jim good-bye, Jim said, "Damn you, when you go home, you won't say a word about what you have seen here, because the business you are engaged in is your bread and butter. Shame on you." The minister did not reply; he knew what Jim said was true. Page after page could be written of similar occurrences, but space will not permit.

August 18th, 1909, Mrs. M. A. Stanley of Jackson, Michigan, and Mrs. C. Nelson, of Bellevue, Michigan, had telephoned Jim for a sitting which was accorded them. They reached Jim's house at 5 P. M. Mr. Kreitzer, of Chicago, telephoned, asking if he could come out to the sitting, and received permission to come. Mr. Kreitzer arrived at 9 P. M., and brought five others along with him. I judged from what I saw, and knowing how severely Jim was taxed at our sitting last evening, that there would not be much phenomena produced at this sitting; that they would not be able to make conditions so that the phenomena could be produced. Having been up until almost two A. M. the previous evening, and writing all day, I asked to be excused from attending the sitting. Jim entered the cabinet at 10:30 P. M., and they sang for thirty minutes, when he was not yet under control, and came out. At 11:30, he went into the cabinet again. Three forms materialized, and Mr. Kreitzer received a message on the slate; Mrs. Stanley and Mrs. Nelson also received messages. Mrs. Stanley received a very important one which she prized highly, and the nature of which I do not know. The slate was handed

out, and this was the message: "Dear brother, the forces are all broken up and we don't wish to work the medium in this element which is in the house; a word to the wise is sufficient. (Signed) Powell and Benton."

This ended the sitting. Mr. Kreitzer is an earnest investigator, and will learn in time to be very careful and not to take with him to a sitting, people who are out for a jolly good time. If he wants to get good results, he will come alone again next week.

Abraham Lincoln gives an account of his passing into spirit life, through the mediumship of Mrs. S. G. Horn. In the next world interviewed.

"It is scarcely necessary to allude to the manner of my death, as it is well known to the public. The feelings that attended my 'taking off' affect me even now. There is something to the spirit, truly awful in being called from the scene of active life without a moment's warning, without opportunity to bid adieu to friends, to embrace long-tried companions—with not one brief moment afforded for settling affairs of life, and transacting necessary business before a final departure from the shores of time. Mine was truly a sublime and awful exit! Not that I was entirely unprepared; I had long felt that a dark cloud overhung my sky and had forebodings of a strange, undefined calamity awaiting me; I felt it when I entered the theater at Washington. Some morbidly pious individuals who undertake to think for the good Lord, have considered my assassination as a judgment upon me for visiting a play house, but they will discover when they reach *this port*, as a good clergyman remarked concerning the great disaster at the

Brooklyn Theater, that it matters not if a man leave for his eternal home from a theater, or from a church, providing he is prepared for the journey. I *was* prepared inasmuch as I believed that every public officer should hold his life in his hand, ready to lay it down in the nation's service; and from the moment that it was revealed to me that I was chosen to release the slave from bondage, from that moment, I felt that I was foredoomed, and I was willing that my life should be sacrificed for that necessary accomplishment."

"On that fatal night which ended with my life's tragedy, when I fell, mortally wounded in the theater, and after a few moments of anguish—a brief time of mental despair, followed by unconsciousness—I awakened to find myself a spirit among spirits, and to realize that I was being actually crowned with a wreath of laurels by the hand of Washington, and that I was surrounded by an innumerable company of spirits 'which no man could number.' When I heard the grand vibrations of heavenly music surging through the air, filling my soul with an ecstatic bliss beyond mortal comprehension, then a weight was removed from my heart, and I experienced a happiness that I had not felt for *ten long years*. Spirits of this world are intimately connected with mortals, how intimately I never realized until I became a denizen of the Summerland. Then I found that the inhabitants of the shadowy realm were perfectly familiar with my life, and under the direction of a wise power they had raised me from obscurity, and had elected me to be the liberator of the southern slaves. They had foreseen the dangers that had encompassed me, and had used every effort to notify me of the plot in preparation to take my life. They had warned me again and again through me-

diums and my own clairvoyance. They knew the danger, but failed to avert it. They foresaw also the long train of evils that would follow the emancipation of the negroes—blighting the fair south and producing temporary destruction to bring about a future state of progress.”

“But such is the order of life. The field must be mowed down before it can grow another and better kind of grain. A plantation looks bare and unsightly when the white cotton is stripped from the pod and sent to the looms; but it returns again in the form of a beautiful fabric which will clothe multitudes. So I believe it will be with the South. She is like the stripped plantation now, but she will receive benefits untold in the form of renewed energy and freedom from debasing tyranny. It shall be no longer North and South, but one people. The Northerners must help the Southerners build their factories, lay their railroads, and strive in every way to aid them in reconstructing their fallen fortunes.” (This communication was received during the year 1885. It is now forty-four years since the War closed, and the predictions made by Mr. Lincoln in this message are now true. Northern capital went south, northern people went south, and today, August 19th, 1909, the South is in better condition than it ever was.)

“I wish to say a few words about my wife. It has given me great grief to see her treated as an insane person. Some thought I was not altogether right, because I had peculiar dreams and visions, and sometimes consulted mediums; but I must inform them that those who scoff at these things are more insane than they who believe in them. It is said that Spiritualism fills insane

asylums. If any cause could render a woman insane, the distressing events which attended and followed my sudden departure were sufficient to have made my wife so; but her belief in spirit communion upheld and sustained her, and it was only through a misunderstanding of spirit direction that she placed herself in a situation, whereby she could have such a charge brought her. But we hastened to her rescue and inspired some receptive, noble minds to secure her release from a living tomb. I do not know that it is necessary for me to speak about the present difficulties of the country, or to applaud General Grant's course, though I heartily do."

"It is impossible to put this country back on its onward march of progress, but bad men will arise now and then and hold office. It is not always possible to judge between a demagogue and a true lover of his country; one who makes the loudest assertions, swears the strongest, promises the greatest,—that one will naturally attract the ignorant." (How true that is.) "Boys will always turn from the rising sun to look at a bonfire. I remarked while I was in the White House, how much more show was made by the liveried servant, than by his master. Grant, who seems so quiet and befogged behind the smoke of his cigar, is a perfect master of the situation. Do not force him to don the livery and make a harlequin of himself, as he would do if he followed the advice of the thousands who beset him. A soldier is better with two legs, but if one has been cut off, he had better wear a wooden leg than none at all. The nation has lost one of its legs; the South is trying to take away its wooden one, (that is the black votes) and make it run on one. I tell you it won't run long."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Spirit Aphorisms—Mr. Burns, the Publisher of the "Next World" Interviewed—Wrote From England to the Medium Mrs. Horn, Asking if She Could Induce the Spirit of Benjamin Franklin to Inform the Public Why so Many Mediums Were Detected in Fraud and Why the Davenport Brothers had Degenerated Into Exhibitors of the Phenomena, at the Same Time Renouncing the Truths They had Once Fostered—Franklin Appeared, but Would Only Answer His Questions by the Following Aphorisms From Spirit Land—Experience of a Reporter of the "Kalamazoo Gazette."

"It is a well-known axiom that fraud engenders fraud. The psychic force of a *determined doubter* calls up lying spirits. Go to a spirit circle, determined to catch the medium at fraud, and at that very seance the most reliable medium will act like the devil." (This won't hold good at Jim's seances though. He has had thousands of the worst skeptics at his sittings and has *never* had such results.)

"Have the faith Christ had, and spirits will materialize in your pulpits and at your reading desk. Doubt them, and they will throw bells and tambourines at you, and say the medium did it." (I have witnessed such scenes as here described at seances' dark circle, but not at Jim's dark circle.—Author.)

“Do not attempt a spiritual friendship with spirits who would degrade you morally or spiritually. A man is known by the company he selects; and the mediums who fraternize with the spirits of Arabian Mountebanks and Egyptian Jugglers, should be received as exhibiting amusing phenomena which will demonstrate spiritual truths only as a trickish monkey demonstrates the origin of man.”

“The spirit who shouts your name through a trumpet and greets you familiarly, may tickle your vanity, but cannot convey to your mind grand thoughts or prepare you for a nobler life in spirit spheres.”

“Do not be discouraged when you find your pet medium to be a fraud; there have been false prophets in all ages of the world. It has taken a hundred years to develop electricity, the telegraph, telephone, and wireless telegraphy. Give us a hundred years to develop our spirit mediums.”

“The great statesmen and thinkers who have passed from earth do not entertain themselves by performing curious tricks to amuse and awaken the wonder of mankind. It may be optional with you whether you communicate with spirits by means of a medium or not, but it is a law of life that they should attend and influence you. On your actions and culture depends the class of spirits who attend you.” (Like attracts like.)

“By shutting your eyes you cannot prevent the sunlight from warming you, neither by denouncing Spiritualism can you prevent spirits from influencing you.”

“A man who would go wrong under the noble teachings of Spiritualism, would have gone wrong as Judas did under the teachings of Christ.”

Experiences of a reporter of the “Kalamazoo Gazette.”

“Having waited forty days for our turn to come, four o'clock Sunday afternoon, October first, 1894, found us at the home of James Riley, the far-famed materialistic medium of Marcellus, Michigan, finding already there, parties from Nebraska, an ex-Mormon priest from Utah, and representatives from Benton Harbor and Kalamazoo, Michigan, and also from Texas, all intent upon a solution of the all absorbing problem: ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ ”

“Mr. Riley lives on a farm of twenty acres, just three and one-half miles due west of the village of Marcellus, and which he owns and cultivates with the assistance of his three sons. The house is a plain, well-cared-for structure, built after the style so prevalent in rural architecture,—gable upright, and wing, the upright being architecture,—a gable upright, and wing, the upright besixteen by twenty-four, one and one-half stories high; the wing one story, fourteen by twenty-six, with the kitchen in the rear. The building stands about five rods off the road on the south side. The family consists of Mr. Riley and wife, three sons, and two daughters.

They have also a married daughter who resides in the immediate vicinity."

"During the afternoon, Mr. Riley and wife were absent from home, and it was very close to six o'clock in the evening before their return. Through the cheerful permission of the family, the interim was utilized by various ones assembled, in an examination of the apartments in which the great medium operates. Every inch of the room, sides, ceiling, and floor was carefully looked over, rubbed, dented, and thumped till each particular skeptic seemed satisfied that all was right, and really ashamed of their captiousness, in light of the fact that the medium produces forms frequently, and with the same facility in other houses. By the way, Mr. Riley's standing proposition to investigators is substantially as follows: 'Take all the opportunity you desire to examine the interior and exterior of the room in your own way, and in addition, if desired, remove the plastering, siding, and floor. I only ask the assurance that they be replaced in as good condition as prior to dissection.'"

"About six in the evening, after handshaking and a few pleasant words with his new arrivals, he dropped into an easy-chair on the front porch, and divided his time equitably between pulling at a good cigar, and yielding up information about himself. Mr. Riley has lived upward of forty years in his present neighborhood, and is respected by his neighbors and fellow-townsmen, having the reputation of being upright, conscientious, charitable, and generous to a fault, and indeed, we saw no reason for modifying the estimate, but rather many evidences on which to confirm it. He is of Scotch and

Irish parentage, of good intelligence, rather dark complexion, and somewhat under medium height, weighing perhaps, one hundred and sixty pounds."

"His account of how he came into possession of his wonderful gift, differs widely from the version which has been so extensively obtained, namely: that it was thrust upon him, unsolicited, at the termination of an almost fatal fit of sickness. 'On the other hand,' says the Marcellus wonder, 'I made the start in the field of investigation as the result, more than anything else, of a statement made in my hearing about eight years ago by the Hon. A. B. French, namely, "that under proper conditions, spiritualistic manifestations can be brought out in nearly every home." From that time, my wife and I sat at the table patiently nearly every night, consuming from one to four hours at a sitting for nearly six months before we were rewarded with a single rap. From faint raps, and far between, they grew louder and more frequent; then followed table-lifting, slate-writing, partial materialization, and lastly complete materialization of disembodied spirits.'"

Not a medium for Revenue.

"After tea, we were invited to look over some correspondence which is indeed voluminous and bears witness that he is held in high appreciation by Spiritualists all over the land, and is much sought after by noted men and women of all classes and callings. Another fact, gleaned from his correspondence, and which would be seasonable to mention here, is that he is in receipt of numerous alluring propositions to give traveling exhibitions of his wonderful and baffling power. Responsible

offers range as high as one hundred and twenty-five dollars per week and expenses, and still he continues to wear himself out for the solace and gratification of the throngs who visit him, at an average receipt of less than one dollar per day. His explanation to the inquiry, why he so persistently rejects so many tempting offers, was the apprehension that his control might promptly and hopelessly desert him, should he attempt to prostitute his exalted gift to a money-making concern. The genuine frankness and simplicity of the man, together with his financial irresponsibility, must impress one at once and forcibly with his sincerity in that apprehension."

Wabbling Divines.

"An amusing and, to some, horrifying state of things is recorded in the record-book kept by Mr. Riley in which he enters the names of those who visit him. The names of clergymen appear by the scores, and Kalamazoo contributes some to the list. There is every reason to believe that a majority of them attempt to go quietly and unnoticed to Riley's, while many of them request that their visits be kept a secret."

Inspection of the Room.

"At precisely nine o'clock all present were invited to make a final inspection of the room in which the medium was to sit; the invitation was responded to by nearly everyone. The closet contained nothing except two or three child's garments which were examined and left hanging. The windows are so constructed that only the lower sash slides up and down, and that was covered with mosquito netting which is intended to be fly-proof, being tacked two inches apart, with the heads of the

tacks liberally rusted. In addition to faithful catches on the lower sash, the meeting rails were securely sealed together with strips of paper."

Preparing for Materialization of Forms.

"All being satisfied that so far as they could carry their investigations there were no contrivances connected with the room to facilitate the medium, the latter was seated in a wood seat chair which was placed about two feet inside the room, holding in each hand as much wheat flour as he could successfully grip. The company was arranged in a semi-circle, the furthest point being, perhaps ten feet from the door. It consisted of the ex-priest referred to, a gentleman from Benton Harbor, two ladies from Kalamazoo, two ladies from Texas, Mrs. Riley, and the representative of the "Gazette." The lamp in the parlor where the forms were to appear, could hardly be said to have been at full blaze; still there was sufficient light to enable one to readily recognize a living friend or acquaintance,—especially if he were not owing him money.

What art thou that usurpest this time of night?

"After a season of waiting of perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour at the outside limit, a slight waving movement of the dark curtains was plainly discernible, which was quickly followed by the appearance of a long white hand; then gently and steadily parting, exposed to full view the perfectly lifelike form of a very tall, portly man, somewhat past middle age; he filled the doorway for at least ten seconds. The apparition made a very graceful bow to the circle, followed by a significant gesture of the right hand; then it steadily sank through

the floor, vanishing in full and unmistakable view of the entire circle. The form was recognized by Mrs. Riley as that of Mr. Benton, the regular control of the medium."

"Very shortly after his departure, perhaps not more than three minutes intervening, there appeared and departed in much the same way, the form of a young man which was not at that time recognized. The third form appearing was that of a little old man, bent over and tottering with years. He came first at the side of the curtain, and was not fully recognized till after his retreat, but on request, hobbled out with great exertion, pounding his way along with a big hickory cane. This time he came out clear of the door, and was recognized to a certainty by a lady from Texas as being her grandfather. The last fifteen years of his life, this old gentleman, as stated by the lady, was afflicted with lameness of some sort, and navigated himself with a similar cane. By the way, the lady is an active member of the Methodist Church, and was at the seance under protest, so, of course, the "Gazette" will not mention she was caught at Riley's."

"The next materialization was readily recognized by the writer as that of his brother who died at the age of thirty-four years. He was recognized by others present beyond all possibility of doubt. He was dressed in a neat-fitting black suit, low-cut vest, white shirt and collar, and black tie. His first appearance was only momentary, the opening in the curtain exposing the form down to the waist. The form re-appeared almost immediately after withdrawing, and, standing erect and

lifelike in the passage, saluted his mother with the right hand in a way that was decidedly impressive. Upon the mother advancing toward him unbidden, he withdrew almost instantly to the shield of the curtain, remaining away but a short time, then walking out fully three feet clear of the door, and according to Mrs. Riley's interpretation, sought to shake hands with his mother. That pleasure was cheerfully accorded, it being a vigorous handshake on the part of both, and while in the act, the materialization drew her very nearly through the door, then, relinquishing the hold, settled to the floor, disappearing at her feet. An important circumstance connected with this dematerialization is that Mrs. Riley, to relieve the discomfort of the medium, exposed him to view almost simultaneously with it, not more than five seconds intervening, and there he sat in his usual position, faithfully gripping the two handfuls of flour."

Other forms identified.

"The gentleman from Benton Harbor recognized his wife and a nephew as they came out. Perhaps the most astonishing and convincing demonstration of the evening was the unceremonious and startling issuing forth from the darkened cabinet of what was accepted to be the father of one of the ladies of Kalamazoo. He was fully six feet, two inches tall, of heavy build, jet-black hair and chin whiskers, his dress being a faultless-fitting suit of black. There was no preliminary waving and hitching of the curtains, as was the case with preceding comers, but this giant form strode out with the pomp of a Napoleon, and halting at a point past half-way between the most distant part of the door, and the circle,

handed the lady a music box which was left in the room at the opening of the seance. Unlike the disappearance of preceding forms, just before regaining the door, this one was divided at the waist, the disintegrating process melting upward and downward till all was consumed."

Thomas Jefferson.

"The next surprise the circle was treated to was the protrusion of a long arm from the curtain divide, holding out a slate on which was announced the near-coming of Thomas Jefferson. Before the slate message could scarcely be read, there appeared at the opening what purported to be the materialized form of the historic Jefferson, who, in clever oratorical style delivered the following: 'My countrymen,—my sympathy goes out to you all. They, your rulers, are perverting your constitution.' The writer, not having a personal acquaintance with the great statesman, could scarcely testify to his identity, though he is willing to affirm a considerable resemblance of the apparition to the pictures of the strict constructionist, now extant. However that may be, or whether it were a 'spirit of health or goblin damned,' there is a dangerous probability that it spoke the truth."

Seance Closes.

"At precisely 12:30 the seance was brought to a close, fourteen different forms, male and female, having appeared, each different from the other, and all different from the medium, all differently dressed; and a majority of them were recognized as exact representations of departed friends as absolutely as it is within the power of one human being to recognize another. With no

means of deception which ingenuity, with all the opportunity that can be asked or offered, has been able to detect or intelligently suggest, the question looms up to us, 'What is it?'

"The witnesses to this remarkable phenomena can be divided into two classes, the one saying emphatically, they are materialized spirits; the other saying, 'I do not know what to make of it;' while a large percentage of those that have never seen it can tell us all about it. In reply to the question, how far he was willing to submit to tests, the medium announced that his house can be examined to the extent of tearing it down, and rebuilding; he will wear clothes furnished him; the house may be guarded by forty men with guns, and those fearful of hypnotism can come after the seance begins and look through the windows and the same result will follow. Hypnotism is very much relied upon by objectors as furnishing an adequate solution of the puzzling phenomena. They are often asserting that those visiting Riley are made to think they see what they do not see. With the medium under the foregoing conditions, it would seem to be about the only solution that could be made available."

"Still the writer would prefer to adopt the following reasoning for himself, namely: Those having visited Riley deny invariably having been hypnotized. Therefore, if they were hypnotized, they didn't know it. If a man can be hypnotized at a particular time, and not know it, he cannot doubt that he is hypnotized all the time, and, hypnotized all the time, he cannot assert that he was hypnotized at a particular time. So when the writer is

charged with being hypnotized at Riley's he can come back at the accuser with the retort that he is hypnotized and doesn't know what he is asserting; that he only thinks the writer hypnotized, and according to his own argument he doesn't know that he is, and it is good for his comfort that he doesn't."

The idea claimed by a good many that the sitters are hypnotized is the veriest nonsense. The idea that a circle of fifteen or twenty people are under that influence; how will such people account for the beautiful messages received from their friends in spirit life, on the slates? Are the slates hypnotized, too? The idea is ridiculous.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Jim's Control, Mr. Benton, Instructs Him in Carpentering when Building His House—Dark Circle—Spirit Lifts the Writer Off the Floor, Chair and All—Sitting at Detroit at Which a Doctor Was Convinced That Jim Was Genuine.

In the year of 1888, Jim had received his pension; he decided that he would tear down the old log house and build a better one. He had never done any carpenter work, and it was quite an undertaking for him, but on account of money matters, he thought he would attempt it anyway. During the construction of the house, and before he commenced it, Mr. Benton assisted him in every way possible at the sittings. Every few evenings, Mr. Benton would write on the slate, just how Jim should proceed with the work. One day he was putting on the siding on the west side of the house up to the window; when he reached the window-sill it was not level and he could not make it fit; he got out of humor and threw his hammer down and quit and had about decided to get a carpenter to do the work, but that night at a sitting Mr. Benton wrote on the slate and said, that the trouble was he had forgotten to cut off the window-sill jamb an inch; to do that and it would be level.

The company at the sitting went out and examined, and found that Mr. Benton was correct. Ever after that

when Jim did not understand just what to do, he consulted Mr. Benton and he built the house with his, Mr. Benton's, assistance. Mr. Benton had been engaged in mining in California and he evidently knew something about carpenter work, for the house is well-planned and well-built under the direction of the spirit of Mr. Benton. (And some people say, "What good does it do you to communicate with your friends in spirit?" In reply I would say that my relatives and friends who have passed to the other life are just as dear to me now, as they were when on earth, and they help us whenever they can. I *know* they have assisted me. Every person on earth has his guiding spirit, either for good or evil.)

Dark Circle. Spirit lifts the writer off the floor, chair and all.

August 21st, 1909. After supper Jim suggested that we have a dark sitting. He thoroughly enjoys these sittings for at these are the only manifestations that he can witness. So to the parlor we went and gathered around a stand—four of us. We sang about two minutes when we had the manifestations that have been mentioned in a previous chapter. The lights were fine, and Daisy, Mrs. Riley's control, made the light so strong that we could see her little hand. After this, Jim said to me, "Do you feel some one standing by your side?" I said, "Yes, he is pressing against my shoulder and side." He stood between Jim and myself. Suddenly my chair began to rise, and I was afraid they would take me to the ceiling, so I jumped off the chair. This ended the sitting. I would state that my weight is one hundred and seventy-five pounds. Weight does not count much

with them, for they have been known to lift pianos with people sitting on them. Abraham Lincoln held sittings in the White House once a week, and a portion of the cabinet attended the sittings. Nettie Maynard was the medium. Mr. Lincoln always knew the result of a battle before the telegraph gave the news. At one of their sittings, the piano was raised off the floor.

To-day Jim received a 'phone message from Diamond Lake, that a party of resorters from Chicago wished to have a sitting to-morrow evening, the twenty-second. He has granted their request. This sitting will be the last one I will attend this trip, and I hope we will get something interesting to give the readers of this book.

Things Jim has never done.

1. Never advertised his mediumistic abilities; has not even had a card printed, nor had a line of advertising.

2. Never allowed his name to be announced from the rostrum at a camp meeting, saying that he was on the ground.

3. Never invited anyone to come to his sittings.

4. Never promised anyone results at a sitting; always says: "We will see what we can get. The great results at his seances are what has advertised him all over the United States and a portion of Europe.

5. He has never been accused of producing fraudulent manifestations, and has given seances under all manner of test conditions; he goes anywhere alone with nothing on his person but the clothes he has on his back.

He was telling me that several years ago when he was in Detroit, a gentleman called on him and stated that there was a party of his friends who were investigating, and desired that he would give them a sitting. They had read an account of his wonderful manifestations in the Detroit paper, and were interested. Jim gave them an evening. He was told where to go, out on Jefferson Avenue to a fine residence. The next day Jim was telling a Spiritualist where he was going that evening. The Spiritualist told him that they were a lot of skeptics and that they would probably grab a form, and that would be almost death to him. Jim said, "I am going. I have faith in Mr. Benton that he will take care of me under any and all circumstances. I presume they have been having experiences with frauds. Well, I will show them that I am no fraud."

Alone he went to the residence. They gave him a large china closet for a cabinet, which contained a large amount of china. Jim said, "If some of that china is broken, you must not blame me, for I won't be responsible for any damage done." They said, "Do you think they would break any of it?" Jim replied, "There is no telling what they will do." (The facts in the case were that Jim was impressed with just that kind of feeling that this party was looking for fraud, and there was no telling what they, the Spirits, would do to the china.) The china was removed from the cabinet.

When Jim entered the cabinet he noticed a certain doctor took a front seat near the cabinet; his attitude indicated that he was ready to jump and seize the form when it made its appearance. One form appeared,—

a young man, dripping with water. He had been drowned a few weeks previous and of course was recognized by his mother who was among the sitters. Mr. Benton brought Jim out from under control after the first form materialized. After a few minutes, he again went into the cabinet; again he noticed this doctor in the same position, and reasoned that if he went under control, this doctor would grab some form that was not known, thinking perhaps that it was himself, and he really did not know what to do, to proceed with the seance or not; he of course, was not under control. All at once, he was impressed by Mr. Benton to walk out of the cabinet, and let this doctor grab him.

Jim walked out and the doctor made for him; Jim gave him one blow, and down he went. Jim said, "What did you want to take hold of me for? I came out for a drink of water." Jim expected trouble, but the sitters all stood by him. He said to the doctor, "You intended to grab the first form that came out of the cabinet, which would have injured me. Take your seat like a gentleman; get such thoughts out of your mind. The forms that come out of this cabinet are the spirits of your friends. I do not do any fraudulent work, as you will find out before the sitting is over." Jim went into the cabinet again, the manifestations were fine, a great many forms materialized, and all were recognized. Jim was congratulated by all, and the doctor came up to him and said, "Mr. Riley, I owe you an apology, and I am very sorry for what I have done; I have witnessed genuine materializations to-night." Jim accepted the doctor's apology and said, "I guess you felt genuine materializa-

tion, too." Jim wasn't feeling any too good towards him. Jim is so honest in all his works, if anyone insinuates anything bordering on fraud in the phenomena produced through his mediumship, they will get into trouble.

The sitting just related was the only one he ever had at which any trouble occurred. I can safely say, that of the thousands who have attended Jim's sittings, *not one* would insinuate that he has ever done one fraudulent act; there has never been one breath of suspicion against honest Jim. Hundreds of letters are received from all parts of the country, with one dollar enclosed, and questions sealed up, directed to their friends. Jim lays them on the bed during a sitting. If Mr. Benton can get the information, it is sent to the writer; if not, the money and questions are returned to the sender. August 4th, 1909, Jim received a letter containing one dollar and questions from Oklahoma; Mr. Benton told Jim to return the money to the lady. One year, Jim informs me, he returned one hundred letters containing one dollar each, and questions, while hundreds were answered. This shows again the honesty of Mr. Benton and his medium. Mr. Benton wishes Jim to receive sufficient money from his mediumship to live, and to get it honestly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A Woman is Led to a Large Sum of Money by a Spirit Child—
Mrs. F. W. Guilliford Finds Buried Treasure at Chattanooga,
Tenn.—Martha, Her Psychic Control, Directs Her to Spot
She Had Never Seen, Would Return the Money to Owner
if He Could be Found.

“W. J. Clark, 499 North Fifty-second Avenue, Chicago, and his sister, Mrs. Frank W. Guilliford, wife of the Genl. Night Supt. of Swift and Co., Chicago Packing Plant, returned yesterday from Chattanooga, Tennessee, bringing a package containing a large roll of currency and a quantity of gold coin they had found in a lonely spot in the outskirts of that city, buried underneath a huge, flat stone. The fear that some needy person would be the loser of his rightful property by her possession of this money, induced Mrs. Guilliford and her brother to make public, last night, the fact that they had found it.”

Guided by Spirit “Martha.”

“Mrs. Guilliford and her brother told a strange story. They said the journey of one thousand miles was made because of the promptings of a little colored child named Martha, who is known only in psychic or spirit world. This spirit child, Mrs. Guilliford says, guided her to the spot where the money was found. The story told by

Mrs. Guilliford is almost without parallel in the history of psychic phenomena; nothing more remarkable of its kind has ever been recorded in the annals of the Society for Psychic Research, whose business is for the investigation of the occult phenomena." (The writer knows of many similar instances.)

Husband corroborates the story.

"The story of Mrs. Guilliford's trip was confirmed by her husband. He accepts the story of her strange guidance as true. Mr. Clark, her brother, is a conductor on the Grand Trunk Railway, and had told many of the employees of the road that his sister had received a strange communication from the psychic world, telling where the money was hidden. He said his sister could go into a trance and summon the spirit of a young girl whom she called Martha. This spirit promised Mrs. Guilliford to guide her footsteps to the scene of the buried treasure. Mrs. Guilliford and her brother have been residents of Austin for fifteen years. The Guilliford home is one of the prettiest in the suburbs."

"The story as told by Mrs. Guilliford last night is as follows:

"Three years ago, Martha came to me one day and told me that she knew where a whole lot of money was buried. She has told me so many things that were true, that I would believe almost anything she said, but the story of a great sum of buried money was so improbable that I could not credit it. Martha was persistent, however, and told me time and again that I ought to go and get it.

She said the money was buried under a big flat rock, on the outskirts of Chattanooga, Tennessee. The place was to be reached by a street car that ran out of the city and crossed a river on a high bridge. She told me that if I would go, she would guide me. I told my brother about it, but he did not think there was anything in the tale. Half a dozen times during 1906 and '07 my little friend Martha came and urged me to go after the money. Finally my brother began to be interested in the matter and talked with several of his friends about it. One man, W. M. Wilbur, 5146 Turner Avenue, offered to pay our expenses if we would go down to Chattanooga and search for the money. This summer Martha has been most impatient with us. Early in August she told me that some people were going to build near the place where the money was buried, and that if I did not go after it immediately the money might be found by some of the workmen.'

“ ‘When I told this to my brother, he decided that we ought to go at once. We left here Saturday, August 22nd, and arrived in Chattanooga early Monday morning, after stopping off a day at Cincinnati with friends. We reached the city about 7:30 A. M., and as neither of us had ever been in the place before, we inquired of a man at the station if any car line went over a high bridge across a river into a suburb. He told us to take the Market St. car. We did not wait to have breakfast but went immediately to the car. Sure enough, the car line ran out over a high bridge. All the way out, I was looking for Martha; I wanted her to tell me where to get off. Finally, the car stopped at a golf ground

near a little place called Hill City. We got out and waited for a few minutes, and when the car started back, we got in. We had not ridden more than half a mile before I saw Martha; she was standing near the track at the intersection of a cross road, and indicated that she wanted us to get off.'

"We signaled to the conductor and he stopped the car and we got off and went back to where Martha was standing. As soon as we came up to her, she turned and went across a little piece of ground and up a high red-clay bank. We followed her closely; arriving at the top of the bank, she started off across a field, stopping to examine the stones in her path. I went on and turned over one big stone, but found nothing under it. I took my brother's umbrella and poked around in the dirt but found nothing. I then noticed Martha had stopped at a stone a little distance ahead, and was motioning for me to come up to her. I went, and found her standing beside a flat stone. We quickly turned the stone over and found a bunch of leaves under it. With the umbrella I pushed them aside, and there under them was a package, carefully wrapped in tinfoil. When my brother saw it, he picked it up and put it in his pocket without opening it; we both felt like we were stealing. In a few minutes another car came along, and we went back to the city. While at breakfast, my brother opened the package. My! it made my head whirl to see those big bills in the roll of greenbacks. He put the money away that night. We went to the Ray Springs Hotel and stayed over night.'"

"Mr. Clark was as reluctant to discuss the case as was

his sister, but said that he would like to return the money to the owner if he could be found and could prove his property. 'Martha told my sister while we were in Chattanooga about the man who buried the money. She described him as an old man, bent with age, and about seventy years old, with white hair and mustache. When he buried the money, he was roughly dressed.' "

"When Mrs. Guilliford and her brother arrived in Chicago yesterday, after their trip, they agreed that it would not be right to keep the money without first giving the rightful owner a chance to claim it. They refused to tell the amount of the treasure, but showed two of the currency notes. They were fifty dollar notes; one was on the Bristol County National Bank of Taunton, Massachusetts, series of 1902, issued January 4th, 1905, signed by S. S. Cushman, President, and A. H. Tetlow, Cashier. The note bears the vignette of John Sherman. The other note was a fifty dollar gold certificate. The money showed the marks of the damp place in which it had been hidden. The bills and the package in which they were enclosed were covered with mould. The ink of the signatures had been blurred by the dampness, but could easily be deciphered on careful examination. The paper was so frail that the utmost care was required in handling it."

"Mrs. Guilliford is not a member of any Spiritualist or psychic society; she says she resisted the communication from the spirit world a long time, but finally gave in and obeyed instructions occultly given her. She is not acquainted with the deeper investigations made by scientific men, who have sought to explain the phenomena of

the spirit world of the mediums. On former occasions she has been guided to sums of money, but never before to so large a sum."

"At the Dearborn railway station, employees of the Grand Trunk Ry. discussed the strange find made by Conductor Clark. The most implicit faith was expressed in his integrity. 'I've known Dad Clark for twenty years, and I'll swear by what he says,' declared a loyal baggageman. 'It's a funny story, but it goes with me when it comes from Clark,' said another. Clark's journey and return had been carefully watched by those employees who had been taken into his confidence."

(Published in The Chicago Inter Ocean, Sept. 5th, 1908.)

The writer would add that Mr. Riley is personally acquainted with Mrs. Guilliford and her brother, Mr. Clark. On their return from Chattanooga, they came to Jim's house and he saw the roll of money as described by the reporter of the Inter Ocean. Facts, such as these, cannot be denied. Of course, it is hard for the skeptic to believe; the only thing for him to do is to go and witness the phenomena himself. Seeing is believing.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Bishop Samuel Fallows, of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Says He Believes in Spiritualism—Prelate Says Science and the Bible Prove That the Dead Return; Calls it immortalism—Fine Manifestations Sept. 3rd and 4th, 1909—O. W. Barnard's Experience at Jim's, Dec. 29th, 1903—Secular Paper Sends a Report to Jim—Reports the People Wild Over Riley.

Chicago, August 30, 1909.

A belief in a communication with the spirits of the departed, which he calls "Immortalism" has been announced by Bishop Samuel Fallows of the Reformed Episcopal Church. He says such a belief is not only taught in the Bible, but has been proved by psychic research. Bishop Fallows denounced the term Spiritualism as repugnant because of the odium attached to it. "This word," he said, "confusedly used, has alienated multitudes in the Christian Church. The church has thus fought shy of the revelation which a true, scientific psychical investigation has clearly made known regarding our immortality. The church ought boldly and continuously to re-affirm the old Bible truth of the influence of the spiritual world."

The odium attached to the word Spiritualism was caused by fraudulent mediums, the object being so great to make money out of it. He speaks of multitudes being

alienated from the church, which is a fact. The investigator finds that he does live again; he gets absolute facts. All his life he had faith to believe that he lived again; his relatives and friends whom he supposed were dead and could not communicate with him, were alive and in a beautiful world where sickness, sorrow and death were not known. The investigator tells his minister about it, and the minister says, "Dear brother, don't have anything to do with Spiritualism; it is the work of the devil." The investigator continues to investigate, and his friends in the spirit world tell him that it is not the work of the devil, and they tell him to live right, do right, treat his fellow men right, and he is all right.

The churches have done a vast amount of good, and will continue to do good; as Bishop Fallows says, "The church ought to re-affirm the old Bible truth of the influence of the spiritual world. Many ministers, to-day, are feeling its influence, for quite often a minister is influenced and controlled by those in the spirit world, and his sermon is along spiritualistic lines, and then he is expelled from the church for heresy, and he goes to the Spiritualist's camp. The time is coming when the church *will* acknowledge that we can communicate with the so-called dead. Many ministers whom I know have attended sittings, and have the evidence of spirit return; but, of course, they do not tell their congregation. I will let the reader answer why they do not tell them.

September 3d, 1909. At a sitting there were present a Mr. Dickman, Mrs. Riley, and her mother. After singing a hymn a form parted the curtains and George Riley, brother of the medium, appeared and reaching

out his hand to a vase of paper flowers on a stand, took them and carried them inside the little bedroom where the medium was entranced. We could hear the rustling of the flowers as he separated them; soon he parted the curtains and handed Mr. Dickman two white roses, saying in a plainly audible voice, "Take these home to your wife." Then, going inside the curtains, he appeared, handing Mrs. Riley three roses; then Mrs. Riley's mother was called to the curtain, and her husband who has been in spirit life a few years, handed her a single red rose. Mr. Benton, Jim's control, then spoke, saying, "The conditions are so beautiful this evening, the friends were able to hand out the flowers."

Mr. Dickman, Mrs. Riley, and her mother received messages on the slates. We could hear Mr. Benton talking to Mrs. Riley's father who was trying to materialize to build up his spirit form. The curtains waved to and fro as he said, "Brother March, do not get excited, and you can show yourself." Then to Mrs. Riley he said, "Your father is glad your mother has come back here to live; it makes him happy, but he is too excited to show himself to-night."

Jim came out of the bedroom for a few minutes, then going back, we sang softly. Mr. Benton spoke, saying, "Keep up that vibration and Dr. Kirshner, Mr. Dickman's control, will come out and get the music box." We did as requested, and soon a form appeared, stepped out into the room to the stand, picked up the heavy music box, held it on the palm of his right hand, and stepped inside the bedroom. This was a beautiful sight, and would have to be witnessed to be fully appreciated.

The little circle of sitters held their breath, and looked on in wonder; this quite exhausted the medium.

September 4th, 1909. Sitting this evening were all young people; two gentlemen, strangers to the phenomena and to the sitters, being from Mississippi, and one from Virginia. They saw some of their relatives, and received messages from them, and were delighted to meet their loved ones. When bidding Jim good-bye, they wanted to know when they could come again, with not a doubt of spirit return. Seeing is believing.

O. W. Barnard's experience at Jim's.

"Having occasion to make a short tour through Michigan, I decided the trip would afford an opportunity to visit the celebrated medium for the phase known as materialization, James W. Riley, otherwise known as Farmer Riley. So securing a livery rig at Lawton on the Michigan Central Ry., December 29th, 1893, I was driven across the country to Marcellus, Michigan, on the Grand Trunk Ry. I had written him from Chicago for a date, requesting an answer to be sent to Lawton, where I expected to remain a few days on business; but not receiving a response, proceeded as stated above, and on arriving at Marcellus at four P. M., found on inquiry that Mr. Riley was in town. Failing to find him, I proceeded on foot to his home, three and one-half miles due west, where I arrived just in the gloaming and was made welcome by his wife; but the medium soon arrived, when we entered into a friendly social chat."

"Mr. Riley is rather below medium stature, a light brunette in complexion, of Scotch and Irish parentage,

and weighing perhaps one hundred and sixty pounds. He has always been a common laborer or farmer, has fair intelligence, limited education, and is liberal to a fault. He lives on his farm of twenty acres, which is mortgaged; and that's what grieves him; he is the father of eight children, five of whom live with him. He has been a medium ten years; became developed at the end of six months' regular sitting with his family."

"The cabinet is simply a bedroom off the parlor in which the writer slept after the seance. At the head of the door, entering the bedroom from the parlor, are tacked two strips of brown cotton flannel, one reaching over the other a little in the middle, the lower ends fastened together and resting on the floor,—'only this and nothing more.' The seance does not begin until the medium is prompted by his control, Mr. Benton, which on this occasion was 9:20. He took his seat on a common wooden-bottomed chair, just to the left of the door, with his elbows on his knees, and the top of his head resting against the wall. When the curtain was taken down from the nail on the right side of the door, and fitted snugly up at the bottom, the light was turned down some, but left sufficiently high to see coarse writing on the slates, or the time by the watch, when held near it. A number of slates had been placed on the bed which stands behind the medium."

"The circle engaged in the usual singing. In about twenty minutes the curtain became agitated, being vibrated and shaken considerably, when a man parted the curtain and stood in the doorway, holding a slate in his hand; he was a rather heavy-set man, with pointed iron-

gray chin whiskers, and was neatly dressed. Then it was ascertained that the slate was for Minnie, Mr. Riley's six-year-old daughter, who was seated on her mother's lap, and who ran and took the slate. On it was written a message to her from her little sister, Elsie, by 'Jackson,' who it seems was an acquaintance of the family, and the first spirit to appear. And so they came, either stepping out into the room, or standing in the doorway. The strongest one that came seemed about thirty, was tall and good looking; he came out of the cabinet, carrying in his hands the music box which had been wound up and placed on the bed, and which now was playing. He signified that it was I he wanted. So I stepped forward, when he handed me the box, and immediately turned around and entered the cabinet. Mrs. Riley came and took the box and placed it on the table, five or six feet from the curtain and said she'd stop it playing. She hadn't more than taken her hands off, when the spirit strode out, strong and bold, picked up the box, turned suddenly round, and carried it back into the room. At the end of an hour, Mr. Benton appeared and stood in the doorway, and spoke in an audible voice, saying, 'We will have to rest the medium.' When Mrs. Riley lifted the curtain, the medium came out, drank milk and ate something, and chatted with his visitors nearly an hour before returning to the cabinet. He took three of these intervals of rest during the seance."

"Probably three-fourths of those appearing were recognized by different members of the circle; they were young and old of both sexes; many messages were written on slates, and handed out; some were in answer to

questions, asked on the slates by members of the circle. Before the slates were placed on the bed, many questions admitting of a direct answer, 'Yes' or 'No' were answered by raps in the cabinet, three raps signifying 'Yes' and two, 'No.' Some of them, toward the close, seemed unable to bear the light, for, as soon as they appeared, they began to sink and drop immediately down to or through the curtain, till they reached the bottom. Their most peculiar feature was their self-luminosity, for we could see them more distinctly than we could see each other in the circle. The seance closed at 1:20 A. M."

"Mr. Riley is popular in Marcellus and surrounding country, for I heard no adverse criticism, but much commendation and the general opinion is freely expressed that he is utterly incapable of practicing a fraud on the public, and such conclusions seem reasonable as he charges nothing for his trouble, accepting only whatever gifts the people may bestow, and which amounts to less than two dollars per day through the year when he is at home, the visitors numbering from ten to thirty at the seances; and they come from every state in the Union, sometimes waiting a month or two for their turn. Preachers come, Jews come, and skeptics come, and all go away convinced or confounded, and all seem to be satisfied of the medium's honesty."

"But it sometimes turns out that those who have never witnessed the phenomena occurring here, know so much more about it than those who have, that they can explain everything; but the writer would not attempt it; he is satisfied to give the bold, staring facts as they appeared, without fear or favor. There may be another set of

laws governing in the ethereal and spiritual realms, which cannot be recognized in the physical universe—‘more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamed of in our philosophy.’ I regard this class of phenomena, the materialization of forms long known to have been given to death and decay, (disregarding counterfeit) the greatest wonder of this wonderful age.”

O. W. Barnard.

Secular paper in 1889 says people are wild over manifestations, produced through Jim’s mediumship.

“Near Marcellus lives James Riley, a farmer who has driven the people in the neighborhood wild with excitement over his startling power in summoning back their departed friends. Riley is about forty-six years of age, has a wife and three small children, and lives a quiet, happy life on a farm three and one-half miles west of Marcellus village. About three years ago, he found himself placed in a trance and, under the influence of some person unknown, he did some very peculiar things. From that time until the present, Mr. Riley has developed the power of a medium of a very sensational variety. Yesterday, two newspaper men drove up to Riley’s unpretentious farm house, and were given a sitting. The visitors were allowed to select any room for the manifestation they pleased. They chose a small bedroom off the sitting room.”

“The room was closely inspected, gummed paper pasted over the windows to prevent their being raised, and Riley sat in the middle of the room with his hands full of flour, carefully smoothed down. Curtains were hung

in the doorway and the visitors were seated in front of it in the sitting-room which was well lighted. Soon the curtains parted and from the darkened room there stepped a very tall gentleman with dark, piercing eyes, black hair parted in olden style, and a very heavy black mustache. His dress was a black evening costume, very old-fashioned; he wore spotless linen, and appeared to be a society gentleman. The face and hands appeared life-like and natural; the figure stepped about two feet forward from the curtain, and smiling graciously, extended its hands to Mrs. Riley who arose and shook hands with Mr. Benton, as she called him. Mr. Riley's five-year-old son ran across the room, exclaiming eagerly 'I want to shake hands with Mr. Benton!' The stately figure stooped down and took the little fellow's hand, and then disappeared into the dark room."

"There were eight other equally startling materializations; slates with writing on them were thrown from the room at the visitors and sounds as of the bed being violently thrown about the room were heard. After the phenomena Riley was found seated as at first with the flour in his hands, undisturbed. The strange manifestations have caused so much excitement that it is now impossible to obtain a glimpse of the farmer medium without making an appointment several days ahead in order to insure an audience. Mr. Riley has thus far been able to perform the tests of his power, day or night, and in any house or room that has been selected by the skeptical visitors."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Seance Held at Detroit, Mich.—Letter From a Prominent Physician of Ft. Wayne, Ind.

“Farmer Riley spent nearly a week in our city recently and gave four of his materializing seances. One of the seances was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Dorman and was, so to speak, ‘a corker.’ Nearly every one of the fifteen sitters had some relative or acquaintance from the spirit side of life to greet them. One of the materializations was a young lady of thirty years, a cousin of mine, who passed over out in western New York, and was known by no other sitter but myself, and was fully recognized by me.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Dorman had a like experience. An old neighbor of theirs when they lived in Washington, D. C., a machinist by trade, called Mr. Dorman to the cabinet, shook hands with him and held his face close to his, to be fully recognized and identified. He was pronounced by Mr. Dorman to be as natural as when last seen by him in the material some eight years ago. As Mr. Dorman stood by the cabinet, the form dematerialized, holding the curtains apart. Mr. Riley was plainly seen, sitting in his chair as this form sank to the floor. Allow me to say here, that we had light enough so we

could see everything in the room distinctly and perfectly."

"During the whole seance we had twenty-nine forms; nineteen of them came at the last sitting. Many messages written on slates were received. We all join in saying that materialization no longer is a belief, but, as demonstrated through the mediumship of Farmer Riley, it is a knowledge. We all feel very grateful that we had the privilege of gaining that knowledge."

G. A. Carr.

Letter from a prominent physician of Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

"To the Editor:—Up to the time my wife and self visited the wonderful, though plain and unsophisticated, materializing medium, Farmer James Riley, I was not satisfied on the subject of materialization, although I had witnessed a few attempts in that direction. In the first week of last month, (May) we visited Marcellus, Michigan, for the purpose of further investigation of this phase of spiritualistic phenomena. The reason why so much time has elapsed since then without sending you a report of our visit, must be attributed to our inability to do it justice. With the single exception that none of our deceased friends put in an appearance, the seance was eminently and amazingly satisfactory."

"We stopped at the Columbia Hotel in Marcellus, the proprietor of which is a new resident of the town, having been in charge of the hotel but a few months; he was accustomed to driving parties from a distance to Mr. Riley's country home, and remaining throughout

the seance for their return with him to the hotel. On this occasion he drove us out. A Mr. ———, Traveling Freight Agent of the Chicago and Grand Trunk Ry., formed one of the party. The latter gentleman was very particular to inform us that he had no manner of confidence in these phenomena, but having nothing special to do, and a small amount of curiosity to see and hear what might be seen and heard, was quite willing to join us. On our way out, our landlord remarked that he was perfectly satisfied with the reality and genuineness of Mr. Riley's materializations, but had never been fortunate enough to have any of his friends appear to him."

"Arriving at Mr. Riley's about eight o'clock, we found him busily engaged in answering a stack of letters just received from parties who were anxious to arrange a date with him, or to have him visit them at their own homes. While he was thus engaged, we with all the skeptics present, proceeded to examine the little bedroom from whence emerged the forms which have rendered Mr. Riley's name famous as a medium. If I have the points of the compass correctly, said bedroom is situated due east and west, the bed occupying the south-east corner. At its foot was located a window which we thoroughly sealed. East of this window was a closet containing women's and children's clothing, every article of which we thoroughly examined. Mr. Riley's house is not large, nor is his family small, and most of the clothing not in use was in the closet. We acquainted ourselves with every article, and utterly failed to see any one of them upon the forms that appeared. We also examined the bed and the floor under the carpet. The

bedroom door had been removed, and in its stead hung two black cambric curtains."

"Having satisfied ourselves that there was no living soul in the room, and that none could gain an entrance from the outside without an effort that would be distinctly heard, we announced our readiness for the seance. We were then instructed each to wash and dry a slate and write thereon anything desired and to place them on the bed on which there was already placed a music box, weighing eighteen and one-half pounds. The space between the bed and the door, to the right of which Mr. Riley sits during his entrancement, with his head against the frame or jamb, his hands full of flour, and his elbows resting on his knees, is about three feet. The door opens into the bedroom upon about the middle aspect of the bed. Mr. Riley sits between the eastern or foot end of the bed, and the eastern or his right side of the door."

"The room in which the circle sat is situated directly north of the bedroom, and is of more than ordinary size. Back of the circle which was composed of two rows, was an organ on which was placed the lamp, the blaze of which was turned up nearly to its full height; so high was it, at least, that every person in the room could be easily recognized, every object distinctly seen; indeed, by a slight effort, ordinary newspaper print could have been read. Mr. Riley holds flour in his hands simply as a test condition which cannot fail to be universally satisfactory. It is very evident that if he were himself impersonating the forms that appear, he could not very successfully use his hands without dropping the flour."

“Hardly had the curtains been dropped after taking his seat, until he began to give evidence of becoming influenced by his controls. In a few minutes we could observe the bottom of the curtains moving as if swayed by a breeze, these movements finally becoming stronger and extending higher and higher until the curtains parted, and there stepped forth a man as perfect and distinct apparently, as any man I ever saw. He was an elderly, intelligent-looking man of commanding appearance, dressed in black,—a well-dressed gentleman of ye olden time with a spotless white shirt and collar. (Mr. Riley, the medium, wore a colored shirt with no necktie, dressed simply as an ordinary farmer.) The gentleman held in his hand, the music box, and beckoned me to come to him. Placing the instrument in my hands, he extended his right hand to shake hands with me. This was said to be Col. Benton, Mr. Riley’s principal control. He said nothing, but I am told he does sometimes speak for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time.”

“I returned to my seat in the circle with the music box, leaving my strange acquaintance standing within a few feet of the circle, and bowing to every member of it. He finally turned to go toward the curtains, but what was most wonderful and satisfactory to me, dematerialized, vanishing away from the top down as if going through a trap door below before he reached those curtains. The next form that appeared was a young man with a clean-shaven face, wearing a mustache; bright and intelligent looking, and dressed altogether differently. He advanced a few steps and beckoned the Freight Agent above referred to, to come to him; but no persuasion on

the part of the entire circle could induce said Freight Agent to stir, so completely dazed was he. This form remained a few moments and then sank apparently through the floor in full view; the last seen of him was his face and head resting directly on and in contact with the floor, before it finally disappeared."

"The next form that appeared was an elderly gentleman in light clothes, and wearing a beard that was quite gray. He was immediately recognized, with an exclamation I shall never forget, as the father of our landlord, who had departed from this life but eight months before. 'Why,' said our host, 'no person under God's heaven can persuade me that that is not my father. I know it is.' He went up to the form and asked him a number of questions that were promptly and satisfactorily answered by the usual silent method of nodding and shaking of the head. The form then stepped back of the curtains and picking up his son's slate from the bed, returned and standing in full view of us all, and directly up to his son, wrote upon the slate quite a lengthy message and handed it to our landlord who stood all the while waiting for it. This message served only to seal the son's conviction that he was verily standing in the presence of his father. When we returned to the hotel, we compared the writing on the slate with several letters written by his father not long before his death, and found them to be identical in every respect so far as writing, spelling and construction generally were concerned; not the least appreciable difference could be detected. His father appeared to him three times on this occasion, seemingly to atone for not putting in an ap-

pearance on all the former occasions of the landlord's visits."

"Altogether there were, if I remember correctly, ten manifestations of men, and two of women, and under circumstances which, to my mind, admitted no possibility of fraud. They all vanished in our sight. It was two o'clock in the morning before the seance ended. At the last, the control, Col. Benton, came out stronger than at first, and went to every member of the circle and shook hands, and then as before, dematerialized before reaching the curtains, in full view of the entire circle. Our Freight Agent lay awake the remainder of the night, and put in his time from breakfast to dinner in writing his family of what he had observed during the night."

"And now I cannot resist the temptation to add a further experience which to me is most remarkable. While I was at Mr. Riley's house, he handed me a letter he had just received from a gentleman from my city, Mr. John Vordermark, asking for a date for his visit. Mr. Riley said he would not answer it by letter if I would be kind enough to tell him, on my return, that unless he could be here on next Sunday evening, he could not give him a date for several months, perhaps. This was on Wednesday evening. On the following day, I concluded to write Mr. Vordermark instead of waiting to tell him, fearing I would not see him soon enough to enable him to take a Saturday train, as there would be no trains Sunday. I accordingly did so. Although we were anxious to stay a few days longer and witness more of these remarkable phenomena, we were obliged to return home, and did so Thursday afternoon."

"On Saturday, I stepped into Mr. Vordermark's store to ascertain if he had gone, when I learned that he had left for Marcellus on the morning train. In the evening Mrs. Seery Hibbits, the noted trumpet medium, now residing at Muncie, Indiana, unexpectedly came to our city, and on the following Sunday morning held a seance at the Hall of the Ft. Wayne Occult Science Society. I was present and asked her principal control, Dr. Sharp, if he could go up to Mr. Riley's seance that evening and materialize for Mr. Vordermark who would be there. He said he would, or at least try to do so. The spirit of Mr. William Malloy, whose widow sat in the circle, spoke up saying that he would go along with Dr. Sharp, and also materialize for Mr. Vordermark if he could possibly do so."

"In the afternoon, Mrs. Seery Hibbits held another seance at which Dr. Sharp reminded us of his intention of going to Michigan to Mr. Riley's seance, as above noted. Mr. Malloy also reassured us that he would be there also. In the evening Mrs. Seery Hibbits held another (the third) seance, at which there were about eighty persons present. We waited and sang and sang, beginning to think we were not going to have any manifestations at all this evening, inasmuch as usually in these trumpet seances we do not have to wait but a short time for them. Finally, another one of Mrs. Seery Hibbits' controls (Dr. Sharp, by the way, is the one who conducts or opens and closes her seances), by the name of Katie Kinsey, appeared by a voice talking through the trumpet, announcing the fact that Dr. Sharp was not here, but that she would try and do the best she could

in conducting the circle. About a dozen voices from the circle immediately asked Katie Kinsey where Dr. Sharp was. She replied promptly, 'He's gone to Michigan to Mr. Riley's seance to materialize for Mr. Vordermark.' "

"In the course of about an hour after this, Dr. Sharp suddenly put in an appearance and said he was up to Riley's, but failed to materialize as yet, but was going up again when he hoped to be more successful. I then asked the Doctor how long it took him to go there. He replied, 'Not a second; as quick as thought.' He then left us and did not return again that evening. The next day, Monday, at another trumpet seance, he informed us that he did materialize to Mr. Vordermark whose wife and children also appeared, and were recognized by him and, describing his appearance and all the particulars connected with it, he asked us to interrogate Mr. Vordermark (who was perfectly innocent of the whole matter) upon his return, if he did not see so and so, etc., etc. Dr. Sharp also informed us that Mr. Malloy failed to materialize, not being as fortunate as he was upon his second visit to Riley's."

"To make a long story short as possible, suffice it to say, Mr. Vordermark did see such a form as Dr. Sharp described himself to be, and Mrs. Riley with several others who were accustomed to the forms presenting at various times, remarked that the one in question was an entirely new face and figure, they never having seen him before. When Mr. Vordermark was finally shown a picture of Dr. Sharp, he exclaimed with enthusiastic emphasis, 'That's him, that's him, and that settles it.' "

H. V. Swearingen.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Excellent Manifestations Through Jim's Mediumship at Haslet Park, Mich.—Master Masons Materialize with Aprons on and Give the Grips and Signs of the Order—Beal Litchfield's Summary of What He Learned in Forty Years' Intercourse With the Denizens of the Spirit World.

"There were wonderful manifestations of spirit return at a seance with Farmer Riley at Haslet Park camp the night of August 24th, 1892. Friends and relatives came to all in the seance room. All were quickly recognized as all but two could talk and give their names so as to be plainly understood, and the two that could not talk were so perfect in their make-up that their friends could quickly recognize them."

"The Master Masons came out to me with aprons on; one with plain white, and two with fancy blue lamb-skin aprons. They gave me the signs, grips and words of the first three degrees in Masonry, as perfectly as I ever got them from a brother in earth life, and as correctly. Two of the three I have sat with in Lodge on this side; Brother John Blackmer, who passed to spirit life about eight years ago near Devil's Lake, Dakota, and Brother George Burnett, who passed over one year ago at Belding, Michigan; the other was a stranger to

me, but an uncle to a lady in the seance room. They are workers now in the Grand Lodge on high, where we all hope to meet them in the sweet by and by. Farmer Riley is not a Mason, and his control, Mr. Benton, told us to tell his medium that he did not want him to join the Masons, not because he did not like Masonry, but so people could not say that it was Riley doing this."

"Mrs. F. B. Warren, the lady of the house where I make my home, is sitting for development for materialization and has for three years; her main control is Alexander Hamilton, her chemist, Thomas Hood, and her physician, Dr. Rusk. They came out and gave their medium treatment (one at a time) by calling up the sitters and forming a circle around them and their medium. Alexander Hamilton walked out and went to the head of the circle to his medium, and took hold of her, and had her get up out of her chair so he could walk through to the cabinet. Then he came back and had us all rise, and form a circle around him and his medium, while he gave her thorough treatment; then shaking hands with all, he bade us good night and returned to the cabinet."

"Then came Riley's son-in-law, Samuel Bellingham, who passed to spirit life last April. He came and gave his name, shook hands with all in the room and then went back in the cabinet to get strength. He then came out again, took me by the arm, and led me to the light that stood on the table, full twenty feet from the cabinet, and turned his face up to me with a smile and said, 'Sam' in a loud whisper. He then turned and led me back to the cabinet and said to me, 'Tell my dear wife

Emma of this,' then bade me good night and disappeared."

"Miss Mattie Shipp of Lansing, Michigan, was taken into the cabinet by Benton, Riley's control, three times, and holding her by one hand, he placed her other hand on the medium's head. Mr. Benton talked and sang with us. He also said that he might put his medium on the rostrum to talk, sometime in the future, but would not dare to do it yet, as he (Benton) was too radical; that they would kick him and his medium off the camp ground. While we were singing the 'Sweet By and By,' Benton came to the front of the cabinet and said, 'Dear friends, none but those that go to sleep in Jesus will rest free from sorrow and pain, as they are waiting for Gabriel to blow his horn to wake them up; but you people on the earth side who have learned this beautiful philosophy, will never rest free from sorrow and pain as long as you can look back and see your friends in ignorance and superstition as they are now.'"

"The whole seance was simply wonderful and awe-inspiring. Every student of Occultism should meet and have a sitting with Farmer Riley, Michigan's champion materializing medium. With love to all, and malice towards none,

Yours fraternally,

Jerry Bricker."

Summary of what Beal Litchfield learned in forty years' intercourse with the denizens of the spirit world.

We have learned the great and all-important truth that so-called death does not end the career of a human being, who has been born on this earth; that when the human form passes through the change called death, the

mind, soul, or spirit loses nothing, except the material temple in which it has dwelt for a long time, or a short time; that the individual entity or consciousness still lives and retains its individual consciousness and mental attributes, although the external form has been laid in the grave and has returned to dust. We have learned that those who are called dead have not gone to a 'bourne from which no traveler returns' for they return daily to us here in earth life, when we make conditions suitable, and tell us of their continuation of life in the higher or spiritual state of existence. Those who come to us, invariably tell us that they commenced their life's work in the higher life, just as exactly where they laid it down in this life when they passed away from the earth form. They also tell us that all who pass from earth to the higher life, take with them their own individual characteristics (whether they are good or bad) and that those characteristics will adhere to them until, through growth and unfoldment, they will be able to rise above their present condition to higher planes of mental and spiritual unfoldment. They tell us that progress is a law of human unfoldment in spirit life, as surely as it is in earth life, and that all who desire to unfold more of their mental and spiritual capacity, will then find ample means for satisfying that desire. But those who are evil-minded, low, and vile, and have no desire to acquire more knowledge, or rise above their low and undeveloped condition, will be allowed to continue thus until the good angel of progress awakens within their dark minds a desire to advance to a higher condition, and then they will find good and kind instructors who will willingly lead

them up the pathway of progress to higher fields of unfolding life. They tell us that those who were good, truthful, just and honest in their earth lives, occupy a glorious home and beautiful surroundings in the higher life and are comparatively happy; but those who in earth life have been low and vile, dishonest and unjust, will find themselves in spirit life, if they pass there in that condition, upon the same plane of thought and action, and will sometime in spirit life suffer the fiery pangs of a guilty conscience, just in proportion to their wrong deeds."

"They tell us that there are many different places of abode for spirits who have left the mortal form,—that each one will find a home in a sphere of life that will be adapted to its mental and spiritual plane of unfoldment. They also tell us that very many men and women spirits, (for all who have laid off their mortal forms are men, women, and children in spirit life) will remain on earth for years, (some for many years after their transition) for the reason that they have not grown or unfolded above the low plane which they occupied on earth. Their development was almost wholly upon the material and sensual plane, and they are earth-bound spirits; hence they cannot for a time arise above the gross earthly plane of life, and therefore must remain on earth until progress raises them upon a higher plane."

"They tell us that the next higher sphere is to be found upon the *first spiritual belt or zone* (which surrounds the earth) and that upon this belt are to be found many spirits of different degrees of unfoldment, but the law of attraction collects together those whose mental and

spiritual unfoldment are similar, and thus society upon that belt is divided into different associations, similar to those on earth. In that sphere are to be found many of the different Christians and others, whose dogmatic creeds chain them to the old forms and ceremonies of the past ages, and there they must remain until they shall desire to know more of life and its uses. Then they will commence like the opening flower to unfold their blossoms of mind to others who occupy a higher plane of spiritual unfoldment."

"The spirit friends also tell us that many who enter that plane of life, expecting to find Jesus, or God, are terribly disappointed when they fail to find either of them in any of the spheres of spirit life. Once at a materializing seance, an aged spirit, a relative of mine, materialized and walked out of the cabinet. She had been a good woman in earth life, a good and zealous member of the Methodist church for more than thirty years, and ever thought it a sacred duty to offer many prayers to the Throne of Grace. In my conversation with her, I asked if she found that her prayers offered when she was in earth life had been of any use to her in spirit life. She replied, 'No, not in the least. I prayed honestly, earnestly and sincerely upon bended knee, for more than thirty years in earth life, and those prayers never did me a bit of good.' I asked her if she had seen God, Jesus, or the golden throne in spirit life. She answered, 'No, I have never found them.' I asked, 'Do you think there is such a person in existence as Jesus of Nazareth?' She replied, 'They tell us that Jesus is in the seventh sphere, and that when we get to the seventh sphere, we shall see him, and that is all I know about it.'"

“I have talked with many of the denizens of the spirit realms, and I have never found one who said they had ever seen Jesus or God, or who had ever found the Christian’s heaven; no one, unless it was a Catholic priest from spirit life, with whom I had a very unpleasant experience many years since. He claimed to know all about Jesus, God, heaven and hell, and he also claimed that all who were Catholics would go to heaven, and all who were not Catholics would surely go to hell. I yielded at first submissively to his control, but soon became disgusted with his bigotry and lack of reason, yet I could not shut him off. For more than a year, if I seated myself for an influence, that miserable old bigot would grab me, and I could not shut him off until my spirit guide would shut him up. It required the combined power of my own will, and the power of my spirit guide to shut him off; but after a time, we conquered him, and he left me. At least, I have not recognized his presence lately.”

“As far as I have been able to learn, there is a large variety of beliefs in spirit life, as there is in earth life. And why should there not be, as long as earth is daily sending to spirit life men and women representing all the different beliefs that are cherished upon earth; and those creeds, however false they may be, will be believed in by some in spirit life, until the believer of a false creed shall through growth and progress learn its absurdity and its falsity. But we think the skeptic will here ask, ‘If that is true, how do you know those who communicate with you tell the truth?’ I have found that in communicating with spirits, it is best for us to

judge of the truth or falsity of what they tell us, by the same rules that we judge of the truth or untruth of what spirits who are yet in the mortal form on earth tell us."

"Human beings who yet occupy their material forms on earth are as surely spirits, as they will be when they shall have laid off their 'mortal coil' and passed to a higher life beyond the grave. And in earth life we are compelled to associate with the good, the bad, the indifferent, the false, and the true, and are compelled to judge for ourselves in regard to the truth of what they tell us; and by the same rule, I judge of the truth of all communications coming from all the different grades of human development in all conditions of human life, whether on earth or in the higher spheres. We suppose that until the human mind arrives at a certain degree of perfection, it will be liable to make mistakes in forming a belief, or to err in judgment. Hence, it seems to us necessary that we should have some basis of absolute truth, with which we can compare ideas, theories, and beliefs presented to us by other minds that dwell either on earth or in the higher realms of being. And we have been able to find *one* and *only one* absolute guide, upon which we can depend with any reasonable degree of certainty, to lead us in the pathway of truth in our search for knowledge in this sphere of existence. That guide is the phenomena of life in all the different departments of being."

"We think we are perfectly safe in assuming that life's phenomena, in all its vast variety of expression, are governed by immutable law; and that forces, like conditions, will produce the same results; and that any man

woman, king, priest, or potentate cannot in the least degree change nature's law. Man may, to a certain degree, change the combination of some elements in some small department of Nature's laboratory that may change the result, but the law will remain the same. Here then, lies the only basis we have found, by which we can compare our belief, and ascertain whether it is true or false. For, if we find that our belief or creed will not harmonize with the laws of life, as they are expressed through life's unfoldings, we may at once know that there is an error in our formula or belief. To illustrate: Man has told us through the writings contained in an ancient book, (and this has for thousands of years been believed by a part of mankind to be true) that this earth with all its mountains, its plains, its rivers, oceans, seas and lakes, and the whole planetary system, sun, moon, and stars, were made about six thousand years ago, and that they were all made and placed in the firmament in six days' time; and that a woman was, by a surgical operation, made out of a rib taken out of the side of a man."

"Before the human mind on earth was sufficiently unfolded to seek for truth in the realms of the phenomena of life, it was very easy for the human mind to believe such stories, especially when they were taught by the priesthood to be a divine truth, revealed to mankind by the great Architect and Builder of this world, and all other planets and worlds in existence. But as humanity came, year after year, and age after age, struggling up the pathway of progression unfoldment, and commenced to study into the field of causation as it is revealed through the phenomena of life which had been produced through

natural and unchanging law, they found that, according to the geological structure of the earth, the ancient theory of the earth being created and made in six days' time could not be true. They also found, by comparing other ancient theories in regard to mankind and their relations with the phenomena of life, that those other theories did not harmonize with the living facts as expressed in the phenomena of life. And here arose the difference between science and theory; between the revelation of phenomena and the relation of priesthood. Science claimed that nothing but the great, divine Architect could write the pages of the great Book of nature, and thus speak to man through the rocky crust of old Mother Earth, and if that Architect, by some called God, had through man revealed his power and will, in a man-written book, the written book should harmonize in all its parts with the revelation of nature's forces which man could not control. The priesthood claimed that the Bible was the only revelation that God had ever given to man, and that all things of earth were earthy, sensual, and devilish. Thus the priesthood has ever been throwing dust in the eyes of those who sought to find more and higher truth."

"But the eyes of a part of humanity are getting opened, and the most intellectual people now admit that nature's laws are God's laws, and that man's creeds must harmonize with nature's laws and force if they are worthy of belief. Again: The priesthood taught the people for many years that when persons passed through that change called death, they went to a 'bourne from which no traveler returned', and well do I remember in my youthful days, the shadow, a thousand times darker than mid-

night gloom, that enshrouded my mental horizon as the form of a loved one was laid to rest in the silent tomb; and by me.

'In death a monster dark was seen
Without a ray of light between
My loved one, whom we laid away
And us who yet on earth did stay.'

'Oh! dark and cruel was that power
That taught such creeds at death's dark hour
When hearts with grief were crushed and broken
The priesthood brought to us no token.'

'Of love, of life from the friend we'd lost.
Our hearts o'er billows dark were tossed
For then, no ray of light we'd found
From the spirit realms, to earth's cold ground.'

"But, by and by! What is that? A rap! Hark! They come, another, another, and yet more. We ask, 'Who are you?' The answer comes, 'I am the spirit of your brother, whom you thought dead, but I never died. I still live; I love you still. I never went to the "bourne from whence no traveler returns;" I am here to tell you of our life in the spirit realms of being.' But the priests tell me, 'Oh no, no, no, it cannot be your brother; he cannot come back. This is fraud; this is deception; this is electricity; no, it is the devil; and God's holy book, the Bible, denounces all such devilish manifestations.' Thus the priests denounced, and for forty and more years

they have kept denouncing, and many of them that are too bigoted to investigate the phenomena, still keep denouncing. For all that, our friends and thousands of the friends of others, still come and keep coming, regardless of the denunciation of Christian bigots, thus proving conclusively that the priesthood has been in error, and that the phenomena of life has been the only source upon which we depend to learn the glorious truth of a future life of the human soul, and the truth of spiritual intercourse with the denizens of the higher spheres of human existence. And from that source, the phenomena of life brought to the people on earth by those who have crossed death's mystic river, we have learned all that we know in regard to a future life, and of the existence of our loved ones who have passed on before. And those lessons we have learned in spite of the denunciations of a dark-minded and bigoted priesthood with its deceived followers."

"The lessons of life which I have learned from that source during the last forty years of my earthly pilgrimage, are of far more value to me to cheer me on my way, and give me courage, strength of mind, and happiness as I wend my way down the sunset slope of earth life, than all the orthodox sermons that have ever been preached or written, or that I have ever heard or read."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Reformation Brought About by Loving Spirits—Extraordinary Seance—Forms Materialize With the Curtain Up—Talk as Never Before—Jim Gets Scared at Spirit Form—A Daisy Brought From the Yard and Placed Between Two Slates—Mr. Benton's Reply About the Benton Harbor Psychic—Slate Writing.

May 3rd, 1910, I was at South Bend, Ind. I received the "Progressive Thinker" of April 30th, 1910, at that point, and I read the following article, headed: "Reformation brought about by loving spirits." The article was written by W. B. Shirtz, who had the experience.

As I was going to Benton Harbor in a few days I decided to investigate this case. A few days later I reached Benton Harbor and in the evening I telephoned Mr. Shirtz I was coming out and see him. He said he would meet me on the arrival of the interurban car the next morning. I visited with him for forty minutes. He informed me that the spirit who manifested to him was John Bodine. He picked berries for him a year ago and that he had died last October. A complete reformation in Mr. Shirtz's case.

A neighbor of Mr. Shirtz told me that a complete change had come over Mr. Shirtz, that previous to these

manifestations he was a hard drinker and always in trouble.

I am a man 49 years of age, and have never belonged to or believed in, any church. Have lived a fast life, and have gradually been going from bad to worse.

About two weeks ago while working in the field I distinctly heard my name called, but no one being in sight, I thought perhaps it was imagination and continued on with my work. When this unseen visitor came closer and began a conversation my hair stood straight up and I went to my home as fast as I could get there.

All this time there were a thousand electric vibrations passing through my body. Upon arriving at the house I told my wife what had happened and she advised me to hitch up and go to our family physician for examination and treatment, which I did.

At the Doctor's office my mysterious visitor said to me: "Dr. Taylor can't do you any good." After getting some nerve medicine and starting home, this mysterious visitor upbraided me on my way, and was home with me when I got there. He talked with me and told me who he was, and that he had died last October, and he wanted me to live right. We had a war of words, and I called him a vicious name for taking advantage of me, and instantly I seemed to be paralyzed and fell in a chair helpless. Then this mysterious friend asked me how I liked it. I had had enough, and told him that I was ready to follow his advice, and with God's help I would do so.

Instantly I was restored to my former self. I have not felt as well and strong mentally, or physically, for twenty years. He told me to go on with my work and he

would go on with me, which he did, and we had a very pleasant visit all the afternoon. At supper time he went to the barn with me while I did my chores. We then went to the house for supper. I said to him: "Supper is ready in the dining car, John, come, take your old seat." He replied, "All aboard, I'll be there." After supper he was up stairs where he had often slept, and I was sitting in the kitchen talking of this most mysterious affair with my wife, when my mysterious friend started an old familiar song that we often sang together. I immediately joined him, singing bass, and he tenor, and we sang the old songs for an hour.

He stayed with me until twelve o'clock at night, then told me he must go, but would come again, but before leaving told me he would give me the same power he possessed. He did, for since then my sister, long since dead, from whom I had been estranged for years, called on me. I asked her forgiveness, which she fully granted but would not leave until I had forgiven my father with whom I had had trouble.

I fully forgave him and have sent for him to come and spend the balance of his days with me, which will be few, as he is now past eighty-three years of age.

I am now a true believer in spiritual unfoldment, and believe that God in his goodness has worked for me to do and sent this spirit friend of mine to me to start me right.

I am able now at any time, day or night, to call my spirit friends to me in a moment's time, and to understand them. Although they are unseen, they make their presence known by vibrations.

I would like to hear from those able to advise me on these experiences.

W. B. Shirtz,

Benton Harbor, Mich.

I am glad I called on him. He said to me, "I have lived a bad life. My remaining days will be devoted to doing good, and I never will drink another drop of liquor," and I don't think he will. People ask the question, "What good is there in Spiritualism?" This case answers the question.

The writer reached Jim's house on the evening of May the seventh, 1910, found him enjoying good health, and the same genial Jim. Sunday evening, May the eighth, at eight-thirty, we repaired to the sitting room. There were present, Mrs. Riley, her mother, Mrs. Marsh and your humble servant. Jim enters the little bedroom used for a cabinet; curtain was dropped and after ten minutes Jim's cough gave notice to raise the curtain. We had previously placed slates on the bed, they were examined, there was a message for Mrs. Marsh and two for myself, one from Mr. Benton as follows: "Brother V., again I have the pleasure of greeting you. We find the vibrations so fine, we will be able to give you wonderful manifestations of the continuation of life after so-called death. Signed John Benton."

One from my Brother George as follows: "Brother Abe, I am pleased to see success dawning for you. I find I did not know or understand you before I left you or I could have helped you more. We are all doing well and happy. Signed Brother George."

Ten minutes later Jim goes back into the cabinet, did

not put the curtain down. With Jim in plain sight, Dr. Powell materialized and stepped to the door and said, "I will put it down." Several other forms materialized and were recognized. After fifteen minutes Jim comes out, and then returns to the cabinet again in ten minutes. In a few seconds, Dr. Carpenter, one of Jim's controls, walked out of the cabinet carrying my largest grip, (they were in the bedroom I occupied) came to where I was sitting and handed it to me, and said in a loud voice, "Mr. Vlerebome, here is your valise." I thanked him and he returned to the cabinet. This was done, of course, to show us what power they had. Three more forms materialized and Jim came out for ten minutes. During these sittings Dr. Powell said to talk instead of sing to keep up the vibrations. I gave some of my experiences at sittings in different parts of the country. Jim returns to the cabinet; curtains were left up. I spoke and said, "Doctor, shall I put the curtains down?" Instantly he stood there next to Jim and says, "I will put them down." I said to him, "We are having splendid manifestations tonight, yes, with your help." Several forms materialized and Jim comes out. Fifteen minutes later he returns to the cabinet and he hears them behind him, and he says, "Please do not materialize before I get under control." Immediately he was under control and Dr. Powell walked up to the door and said, "Here I am again," and put the curtain down. Another form appeared and put the curtain up, and Jim said, "Get me a drink of water." I went to the kitchen for it, was not gone to exceed two minutes, went to the door of the cabinet, the curtain was up, Jim was under control and there stood an old gentleman with long,

white whiskers. When I entered the sitting room and was within five feet of the cabinet door, there was no form in sight and not until I stood at the door did the old gentleman appear. I was close to him and the old gentleman was Mrs. Marsh's grandfather.

They were coming so thick and fast and so close together, Jim was getting nervous. Mrs. Riley said, "Your medium is getting nervous." Mr. Benton replied in a loud voice, "That is the way we want him. Jim says they are so strong, if they don't quit materializing before I get under control I won't sit any more," for when he entered the cabinet this time, there stood a form and Jim was badly scared. He said his heart went up to his throat. In all the sittings, thousands of them, this is the first form he has ever seen at his sittings. He went under control and the slate was handed out which read: "Now my dear subject, Mr. V., we feel so thankful for the splendid vibrations you have given us for it has enabled us to manifest our presence intelligibly. This medium is in fine condition for our work. All drink your coffee and eat your lunch, then we will use him more. We came out to the sitting room bringing our slates. Mrs. Riley had a double slate. She examined the slate. There was a message from George Riley, Jim's brother, and Daisy. I stood by. There was nothing between the slates. Jim had an impression to take hold of those slates with Mrs. Riley. They held them probably one minute, then opened them, and there was a fresh daisy, just plucked from a bunch growing just off the porch. I saw the slate just before they were closed and there was no daisy there. If that daisy had been plucked before we

commenced the sitting at eight-thirty (time now being eleven-thirty), it would have been wilted. I replied to Dr. Powell's message as follows: "Dr. Powell and John Benton, we thank you kindly for the splendid manifestations you have given us this evening, they are the finest I have ever witnessed in all my twenty-two years' experience. The manifestations I have witnessed here tonight excel those I witnessed here when the medium was at his best twenty years ago. I thank you."

Signed A. V.

While we were eating lunch I remarked I would like very much to take Dr. Powell by the hand. Jim again enters the cabinet. After our lunch, we left the curtains up. Dr. Powell appeared and put them down, and extended his hand to me and I shook hands with him. The Doctor says, "I think I have done pretty well." I replied, "Indeed you have."

We sang for ten minutes, and Jim came out and two messages were on the slates, one in answer to my question, "What do you think about the Benton Harbor Psychic, Mr. Shirtz?" The answer: "The Benton Harbor case is one where we found a psychic whom a friend could reach and reform will be of usefulness to humanity."

Signed, Dr. Carpenter.

The other message as follows: "Brother V., we appreciate your kind words, we will tell you all is well, and success will follow you, the forces are getting exhausted, we will bid you good night."

Signed, John Benton & Powell.

Dear Reader:—

What is recorded in this book are actual facts. They actually happened, I have not exaggerated in the least, you can verify what I have written in this book by going to Farmer Riley's house, where I assure you you will be welcome and well treated, and I trust he will be spared many days yet to give this great truth to the people."

—Conclusion—

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Author's Experience Which Consisted of Trumpet Talking in the Dark; Trumpet Talking in the Light; Automatic Writing Backward; Clairvoyance and Talking to the Spirits Over the Automatic 'Phone.

Twenty years ago, in the city of D——, state of Ohio, I met a German friend of mine on the street, who asked me if I had ever investigated Spiritualism. I replied that I had not; that I had never given it a thought. He remarked that he would like for me to do so; that he knew I would investigate sincerely, and in the right way. He informed me of what he had been receiving from his spirit friends through the mediumship of Mrs. S.—. I at once became interested, from the fact that my experience in the orthodox church had been very unsatisfactory thirty years previous, and I was looking for light on that subject. I could not believe what was taught in the church; I was at sea regarding the hereafter, and I told him that I would investigate and if I found that we could communicate with the so-called dead, I would tell the people; and if we could not, I would tell the people. And the main object in writing Farmer Riley's life, and giving my experience is that the people on earth who are more interested in the life hereafter, than in this, may investigate this subject. Those who go to the other

life understandingly are farther advanced than those who do not.

The knowledge I have on this subject is to me beyond price. The question is settled so far as I am concerned; we make our own heaven and hell, here and hereafter. I am trying to live and do right that I may go to the higher spheres when I leave this life.

I left no stone unturned during my investigation of this subject to get facts from those in the spirit world, and I have undisputed evidence; and to the reader of this book I would say, if you are an investigator, I advise you should you in your investigations unfortunately come in contact with a fraudulent medium, let it not deter you from continuing your search for light on this subject. "Seek and ye shall find."

My German friend gave me the address of Mrs. S——, a trumpet medium. The next day I called on Mrs. S——; I had invited a friend of mine, whom I will call Mr. H——, and who passed over last summer, to accompany me. We were admitted by Mrs. S——, and I stated that Mr. H—— and I desired a sitting and that it must be under strict test conditions; that I would lock the door and put the key in my pocket, and that Mr. H—— would hold one of her hands, and I the other, so that if the trumpet came up from the floor and talked to us, we would know that she did not do it. She replied that we could have a sitting under those conditions. I accordingly locked the door, and we took hold of her hands.

There were only three of us in the room, which was dark. We sang a hymn or two, and the trumpet was

up against the ceiling. It came down to me and called me by name. I asked who it was, and it replied, "Yeoman, Col. Yeoman." I will state here that Col. Yeoman was Colonel of the 90th O. V. I., my regiment during the Civil War. I asked, "Why, Colonel, is that you? Where did you die?" He replied that he was not dead. I asked, "Where did you pass over, Colonel?" He replied, "At Tate Springs, Tennessee." (He had gone there for his health but I did not know it.) I then asked, "Who was there with you, Colonel, when you passed over?" He replied, "My wife and my brother." (This also I did not know at the time, but learned subsequently that such was the fact.) "Where did we hold the reunion of our regiment last, Colonel?" He replied, "At Somerset, Ohio. I was there; you felt my presence." "Whom did we elect President, in your place, Colonel?" He replied, "Capt. Keller." "What did your wife give me at the reunion?" He answered, "My photograph." He thanked me for giving him an opportunity to communicate with him, and bade me good-bye. We had been interested together in a manufacturing business, and through our army service, of course, were personal friends.

He set the trumpet down, and in a few moments it was up in the air and spoke to my friend H——, "How do you do, my dear son?" and called his full name. (At that time I did not know he had a middle name.) He replied, "Is that you, mother?" She replied, "Yes, my son, I left you when you were quite young," (he was two years old when she died), "but have been with you all these years." She talked very beautifully, and Mr.

H—— cried like a child. She bade him good-bye, and his son then came to him. He had been killed by the cars a year or so before. He sang through the trumpet, songs he had sung when on earth.

The sitting was very satisfactory. Mrs. S——'s control, Dr. Sharp, also came and talked at length in a loud voice; the others spoke in a loud whisper, but when they become accustomed to talking through the trumpet, they speak loudly. These manifestations were all produced, and we never released our hold of Mrs. S——'s hands.

The following week we went again, and the sitting was under the same test conditions. The Colonel tried to raise the trumpet but could not do so, and I was unable to talk with him. Mrs. S——'s control, Dr. Sharp, stated such was the case. My friend H—— talked with his mother, his son and his Uncle David. I also talked with my mother, my father and my brother who had been killed in battle during the Civil War. He told me at what time in the morning he was wounded at the Battle of Champion Hills, near Vicksburg, Miss., while in a charge under Gen. Logan. He told me who carried him off the field,—my brother Peter,—and he also gave the number of his grave at Vicksburg; he was buried among the unknown.

My father gave me full particulars of his life from the time of the commencement of the Civil War up to the time I was talking to him. I asked him the question, "Where did you give me the last whipping?" He told me where, "in Illinois," and why he did it. When my mother spoke to me I said, "Mother, who of our family is there with you?" She named them all. Mr. H——

and myself attended probably fifteen sittings with Mrs. S——. Several times we had utter failures; we received no manifestations whatever, though we sat for two or three hours and did a great deal of singing. There were from eight to twelve persons at these sittings and the fee was 50 cents, but when there were no manifestations there was no charge.

My friend H—— during our sittings was in constant communication with his mother. She told him how to conduct his business and he followed those instructions and everything came to pass just as she had prophesied, and his business was a success beyond his expectations. At our sittings she would tell of events that happened during the day in his business. He said to her at one of the sittings, "Mother, you are with me a good deal." She replied, "I am with you a good portion of the time." He said, "Were you with me this morning when I received my mail?" She replied, "Yes, my son," and gave him the contents of several letters he had received that morning. His mother has come to me several times at sittings with different mediums in other cities.

The business I was engaged in at that time took me to a neighboring city, and there I met Mr. John D. Arras, one of God's noblemen, the soul of honor and an ardent Spiritualist for twenty-five years. His wife and self were sitting for development to get some phase of mediumship; and here let me say that every man, woman and child on earth has these qualities within himself in a higher or lower degree, and by developing these latent qualities a medium is produced. Some are natural born mediums; never have to sit for development. Mr. J. D.

Arras and wife sat for development for three years one hour each week, in darkness; put themselves in a passive condition, and at the end of three years Mrs. Arras became a trumpet medium, and Mr. Arras' brother George, who had died twenty years previous, was her control. Under instruction of her control, they held sittings once every week for one year, at which only certain persons were admitted. At the end of the year her control said to Mrs. Arras, "You are now fully developed, and can admit anyone, and will always get facts; no personating," and such was a fact. Mrs. Arras and Mrs. S—— were the best trumpet mediums I ever came in contact with; though I must make an exception of a young man at C—— who, I think, was equally as good, and my experience with him I will now relate.

My friend Arras said to me one day, "I know of a young man here who is a trumpet talker, a clairvoyant and an automatic writer." I replied, "John, I am investigating this subject and would like to see what he can produce." Mr. Arras arranged with him for a sitting at his house. The manifestations by trumpet were fine and the automatic writing backward was something new to me. I will call this young man C——, as he might be displeased if I gave his correct name. He was certainly a wonder. Here was a medium, not a professional, not after the dollar. I decided to offer him a position with the company by whom I was employed, and while I was satisfied he would make a salesman, I did not care whether he proved one or not, and offered him a salary which I told the Company I would pay, but they would not allow me. He proved to be a splendid salesman and

a fine medium. We used to get the automatic writing backward, riding on the train in Ohio. His control was his wife's own uncle and a Baptist minister, when on earth.

Mr. C—— disliked to give sittings for anyone. He was not a Spiritualist, but a natural born medium. Many times his control threatened him in the following manner: "C——, if you do not give this to the people, this that we are trying so hard to do, I will take the power away from you." I received valuable information through the sittings had with him and we had a great many. The manifestations were so wonderful that I took him to D—— to give a sitting there for my friends. At that sitting a number of the sitters' friends and relatives (spirits) came and talked to them. When a loud voice from the trumpet spoke to C——, the medium, saying, "How are you, C——, old boy?" C—— said, "Who is it?" The voice answered, "Jess Weber." C—— was so surprised that he said, "Why, Jess, I used to correspond with you, but the correspondence ceased three years ago." The voice replied, "I passed over (died) in a western town three years ago." C—— said, "You must control some one; you talk so loudly." He replied, "I control a medium in San Francisco, and your control invited me here tonight to help you out at this meeting." C—— said, "You don't pay any railroad fare." He replied, "Oh, no, we travel as quickly as thought." C—— said to him, "What was the last trip we took together?" His answer was, "We went fishing at the Reservoir at Newark, Ohio." Told him where they hired their conveyance and at what hotel they stopped; in fact, gave

him the full particulars. Weber continued to be one of C——'s controls while I had sittings with him.

Some six years after I had employed Mr. C——, the medium, I met him in Cleveland, Ohio, and asked him if he would not give a sitting for a friend of mine who had never witnessed trumpet talking. He complied with my request, and we had at Mr. Thompson's house about fifteen people, among the number being Prof. John Early, a fine pianist. I asked the Professor to take his seat at the piano and accompany the singing. In a few minutes the professor said that the trumpet was on his head. We stopped singing and the voice from the trumpet spoke to the professor, calling him by his given name, "John," and spoke of events that had occurred years ago in their past life in Scotland, where his father had died. He then said to the Professor, "John, play that old piece that we used to play together thirty-five years ago." The Professor was so excited, so overjoyed that he had been able to talk with his father, that he could not think of the old piece for a time. He finally began playing it and his father sang it in the trumpet, and an aunt who had died in Scotland, came and sang with them independent of the trumpet. The other sitters very nearly all had communications from their friends who had passed to the other life and all were delighted with the sitting. Space will not permit of my giving account of many sittings with Mr. C——, for I have other sittings of which I wish to speak that are even more wonderful.

I will give you an account of a sitting with Mrs. Arras that was wonderful indeed. A lady spirit spoke through the trumpet and requested that Mr. Arras deliver a

message to a cousin of hers. Mr. Arras said he would certainly carry out her wishes. The spirit said, "I lived at M—, in Michigan, with my aunt. At my aunt's death I was to inherit the property, and at my death it was to go to my cousin. I died on a certain date; my cousin does not know it. He is now entitled to the property. He is a traveling man and gets his mail at the General Delivery at C—. He will be there within two weeks." Mr. Arras wrote him, addressing the letter in care of the General Delivery at C—, and wrote on the letter to hold until called for. Within two weeks a gentleman called at Mr. Arras' place of business and presented the letter and asked him about what he wished to see him. Mr. Arras said, "I am a Spiritualist; my wife is a medium. Your cousin, Miss—, came to one of our sittings and told me to inform you that she died on a certain date and that you are now entitled to the property." He said, "Is that so?" He started to go away. Mr. Arras said, "I have just one favor to ask. Write me if these are facts." Within a week he received a letter from this man saying that his cousin had died on that date; that he had the property and that he was going to investigate Spiritualism. I could give so many more just such good tests.

I will now give you my experience with a medium whose name I cannot recall. She lives on the north side of the Ohio River, opposite Huntington, W. Va. She gives trumpet talking in the light. Prof. Hyslop went to see this lady about a year and a half ago. I made a trip to see her about six years ago. When I crossed the Ohio River on the ferry, the old ferryman told me a

great deal about her ; that for years he had taken so many people across the river to see her ; and of the wonderful manifestations they experienced with the trumpet in broad daylight. I found the cottage and the lady.

I told her that I had been informed that she could produce trumpet talking in the light and that I should like to witness it. She produced the trumpet, which was different from those used in a dark circle—not quite so long, small at each end and large in the middle. She stated that her control had told her how to have it made. She asked me if I could play the organ and I replied that I could. I played a hymn ; she handed me the trumpet and said, "Just place it to your ear." There were three of us in the sitting room, the medium, her husband and myself ; they were sitting opposite me ; the sun was shining through the window. I placed the trumpet to my ear in an opposite direction from the medium and her husband, and my name was called to me in a loud whisper. I asked who it was and it replied, "George." I asked, "George who?" and it replied, "Your brother George." (He had died some six years previous and I had communicated with him some four years previous.) I asked him a number of questions and he answered them correctly and I then bade him good-bye. The medium's control then talked to me in a loud voice quite at length. I said to this lady, "Why don't you go out and give this to the people?" She replied that she had been a medium since she was thirteen years old (I should judge she was then about fifty) ; that so many people came to her house to witness manifestations that she could not leave home. She also stated that they got

the trumpet talking out in the yard, any place. She is certainly a wonderful medium, and should convince the most skeptical.

I will give two more experiences in trumpet talking. Mr. E. Barcus, a prominent gentleman of Columbus, Ohio, and a personal friend of Mr. and Mrs. Arras, attended sittings at Mr. Arras' residence after Mrs. Arras obtained the trumpet talking. Mr. Barcus held about \$180,000 worth of B. & O. bonds on the line running from Columbus to Cincinnati, and there were a great many more who held these bonds in Columbus. When Robert Garret, President of the B. & O., died, the B. & O. officials endeavored to force these bond-holders to sell their bonds at less than what they had cost them. At a sitting one evening at Mr. Arras' residence, Mr. Barcus casually remarked what the B. & O. officials were trying to do to them. Mrs. Arras' control, Mr. Arras' brother George, said "I will bring Robert Garrett here and you can talk with him." In a few minutes Mr. Arras was talking to Mr. Barcus and he said, "Mr. Barcus, as a matter of justice and right, you should receive what you paid for those bonds, and if you will follow my instructions you will get what you paid for them. I go to the meetings of the Directors and I know just what action they will take toward getting those bonds." Mr. Barcus talked with Mr. Garrett at different times for a year, and the time had arrived when something had to be done. Mr. Barcus told Mr. Garrett that he would follow his instructions. Mr. Garrett said, "Appoint a committee to go down to New York and meet the Directors, but do not put yourself on the com-

mittee, for you will take what they offer, 20 cents on the dollar for those bonds. Have the Committee ask them 60 cents; they will offer you 20 cents, but they will finally give you 40 cents on the dollar for them." The Committee was appointed, took the bonds along with them, they were offered 20 cents, the Committee asked them 60 cents, and they compromised and received 40 cents for the bonds, just as Mr. Garrett had told Mr. Barcus. After this settlement, Mr. Barcus was talking to Mr. Garrett at a sitting with Mrs. Arras. Mr. Barcus thanked Mr. Garrett and said that they did not quite receive that which they paid for the bonds, 41 cents, but he was well satisfied. Mr. Garrett replied, "You have received dividends on those bonds for years and they were a good investment," etc.

The Presbyterian Church at the corner of Sixth and State Streets, Columbus, Ohio, was for sale, a stone edifice with a fine pipe organ in it, and they wanted about \$20,000 for it. They went to Mr. Arras, who was President of the Spiritualist Society, and wanted to sell it to the Spiritualists. Mr. Arras stated that they were not in a condition financially to buy it. Mr. Barcus heard of it and told Mr. Arras to buy the church and he would pay for it and make a present of it to the Spiritualists; that through Mrs. Arras' mediumship he had been put in communication with Robert Garrett, and thereby had been saved a great many thousand dollars. The church was bought and paid for by Mr. Barcus and the Philosophy is presented to the public on a high plane. It is a monument to Mrs. Arras' mediumship and Mr. Arras' untiring work in Columbus as President of the Society

for twenty years. Mr. Arras made the change to the other life last December, a year ago; Mr. Barcus, some five years ago. I have communicated with Mr. Arras, and will relate my experience farther along.

As stated before, I was located in C—— for a large manufacturing concern for a year, and was then sent to Michigan. I received a telegram saying that my brother George had died suddenly in Chicago, where he had gone to visit his daughter. His home was in New Holland, Ohio. The telegram had followed me in my travels and I received it too late to attend his funeral. Here was a chance to make a splendid test. When I returned to D——, I invited six people to attend a sitting with Mrs. S——. None were Spiritualists except the medium and none knew my brother George. He was not known in D——, and New Holland was eighty miles from D——. At that sitting the trumpet came to me and called me by name. I asked who it was, and it replied, "Your brother Will." I replied, "I never had the pleasure of your acquaintance; you died before I was born." I asked him a great many questions relative to our family and he answered them all correctly. I then casually asked him if any of our family had joined him lately, and he replied, "Yes, George is here and he will talk to you." I bade him good-bye and then George spoke to me. (I always put them on the witness stand and my questions are so worded that the answers will satisfy me beyond the shadow of a doubt that I am talking to the person they claim to be.)

I asked him, "George, where did you die?" He replied, "Why, Abe, I am not dead." "Where did you pass

over?" He answered, "In Chicago." "At whose house?" "At O—'s house" (his daughter). "Now, George, when I talked to you upon this subject six months ago what did you call this?" "I called it mind reading. I was wrong; I am sorry I did not investigate." Those were the exact words he used six months previous when I talked with him on the subject. "Now, George, you give me my life from the time I went into the Army during the Civil War, and I will begin to think I am talking to you." (He was in the grocery business and the business was conducted in my name on account of a previous failure caused by a partner.) He replied, "I came up to the store one morning and told you I was going to enlist in the Army." "What did I say to you?" "You said you would go instead; that you were single and I had a family." "Well, George, I enlisted and was gone for three years. How much money did I send you?" "It was not very much," he replied, "one hundred and fifty dollars." (That was the exact amount.) "After my return from the Army what interest did you give me in the store?" He answered, "A one-third interest." "Who held the other third?" "Mr. E——." "After we had been in business for one year, what proposition did you make to me?" He answered, "You know Mr. E—— was very unsatisfactory to some of our customers, and I wanted to buy him out. I told you that I would give you each twenty-one hundred dollars for your interest, and I would give you the sorrel horse if you would get Mr. E—— to accept the twenty-one hundred dollars, and then you could come back with me in the business whenever you wished." "Well, George, that deal was

carried through, and Mr. E—— and I engaged in other business for one year; then, where did I go?" He answered, "To Illinois. You were ticket agent and telegraph operator at Pana, Illinois, and station agent at Kansas, Illinois." And so he continued my life up to the time I was talking to him. That brother was dear to me; he was one of the best friends I ever had.

In the preceding pages of this narrative I spoke of J. D. Arras, whom I have known for so many years. We had frequently spoken about the other life and we agreed that whoever went first should come back and greet the other, as we always did in this life. Mr. Arras made the change last December. During the month of April, I was in Toledo, Ohio, and on Sunday afternoon attended a Spiritualistic meeting on Thirteenth St., at a church which they own. Mr. Dunniken, the president of the Ohio State Association, delivered a fine lecture. At the close of the lecture, a lady began to give tests to those among the audience. She gave tests to two young men who were sitting in front of me, and they were recognized. She then addressed me and stated that a gentleman standing by my side, and of about my size and age, gave his name as J. D. Arras and said, "Old boy, it is all right. You remember what we used to talk about. It is beautiful here," etc., etc. I thanked him for coming to me, and arose and stated to the audience that I did not know a soul in the audience, and that was the first and only test I had ever received during my investigation of Spiritualism, in a public meeting, which covered a space of twenty years.

Talking to spirits over the telephone.

During the month of June, 1909, I met a magnetic healer at a friend's house in the city of D——; he was giving the lady of the house treatment for rheumatism. I remarked that he must be a medium, else he could not make the cures. He answered and said that he had been a trumpet medium, and that he had to give it up in order to give magnetic treatments; that he could talk to his friends in spirit life over the telephone wires, when they had the automatic 'phones (no exchange) and he invited me to come to his office and witness it. I stated that I would later on; I did not say when I would go, for certain reasons which probably the reader will understand,—to make it plain, if I had told the gentleman that I would call the next morning, how easy it would have been for him to have a confederate at the other end of the line.

I called upon him, unexpectedly, the next morning and stated that I would like to witness this phenomena. There were no patients in the office, and we sat down near the telephone. He said, "We will see if we can get anything; some weeks they call me two or three times." We sat for five minutes talking on other subjects, and presently the bell rang, and the healer put the phone to his ear and I heard a child's voice say, "How do you do, papa? I heard you and this gentleman talking yesterday, and he said he would like to hear the talking over the 'phone, and I have come this morning to show him we can do as you said." I took the receiver and placed it to my ear and said to her, "This is wonderful. I predicted ten years ago that we would be talking to

those in spirit life over the wires, and here it is." She replied by saying that she could "talk to papa whenever she wanted." I thanked her and handed the receiver back to the healer, and he asked her "if mamma was going to talk to him," and she replied, "Not this morning," and he bade her good-bye.

The magnetic healer gave me permission to write this up for the paper, and use his name. I have not done so in this instance, as I do not wish to do anything that would injure his business; for he has a great many patrons who are orthodox, and who have been cured of ills that the flesh is heir to, and if they knew he was a Spiritualist medium, they would have nothing to do with him. He is a very estimable gentleman, and any reader of this book can have his name and address by writing to me.

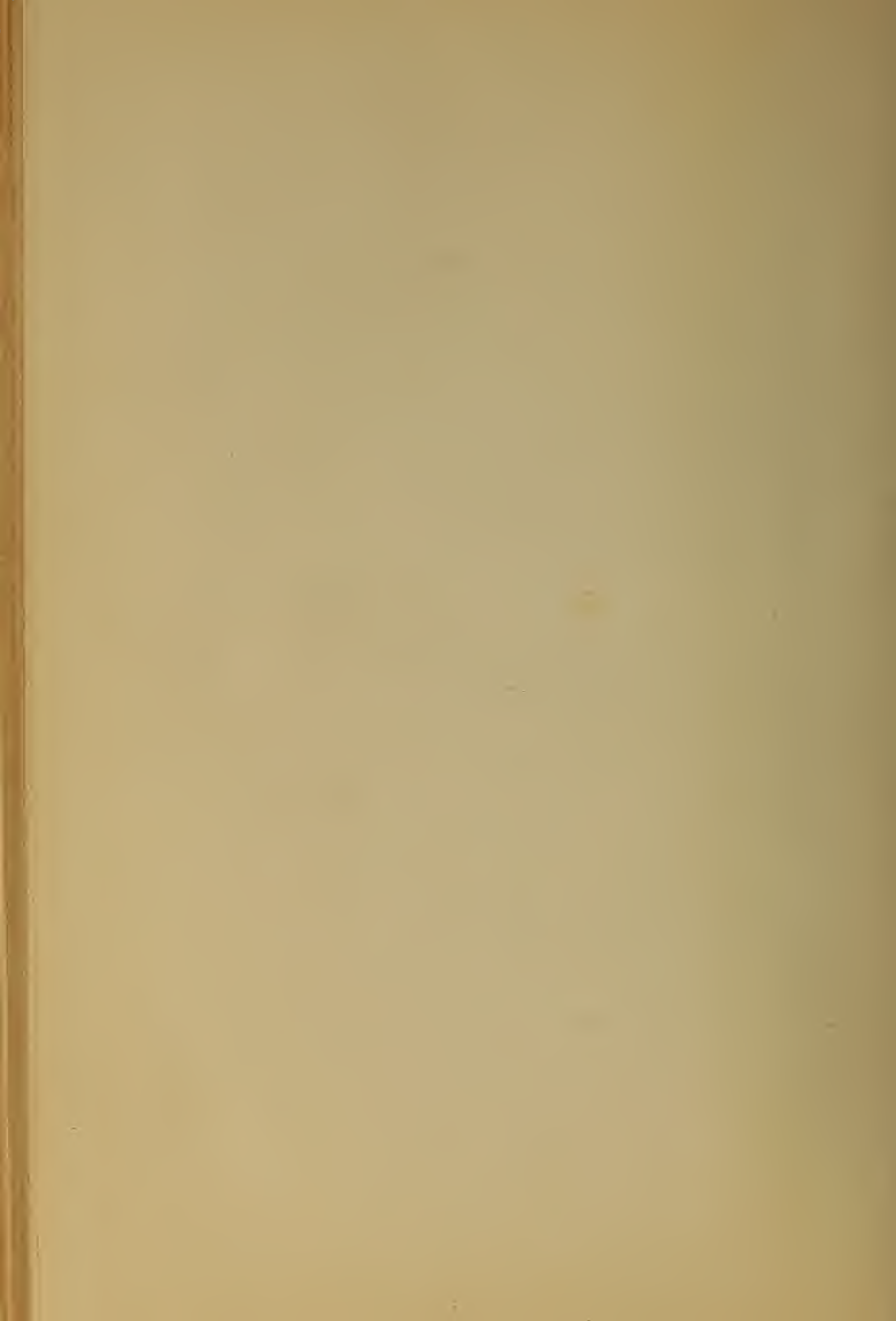
I could relate my experience at hundreds of trumpet circles in different cities, with different mediums. I have used every means at my command to arrive at facts relative to the truth or falsity of Spiritualism, and I can honestly say that it is an absolute fact. You can communicate with your friends, the so-called dead. The Psychical Research Society in this country, and in foreign countries, are investigating this philosophy, and the time is not far distant when science will say it is true. In fact, all of our scientific men now say it is true.

And now, kind reader, I will bring this to a close. I can hear some say, "If I had witnessed such phenomena as those produced at Farmer Riley's house, I would believe in Spiritualism." You can witness them by going to his home, and if the distance is not too great, he might

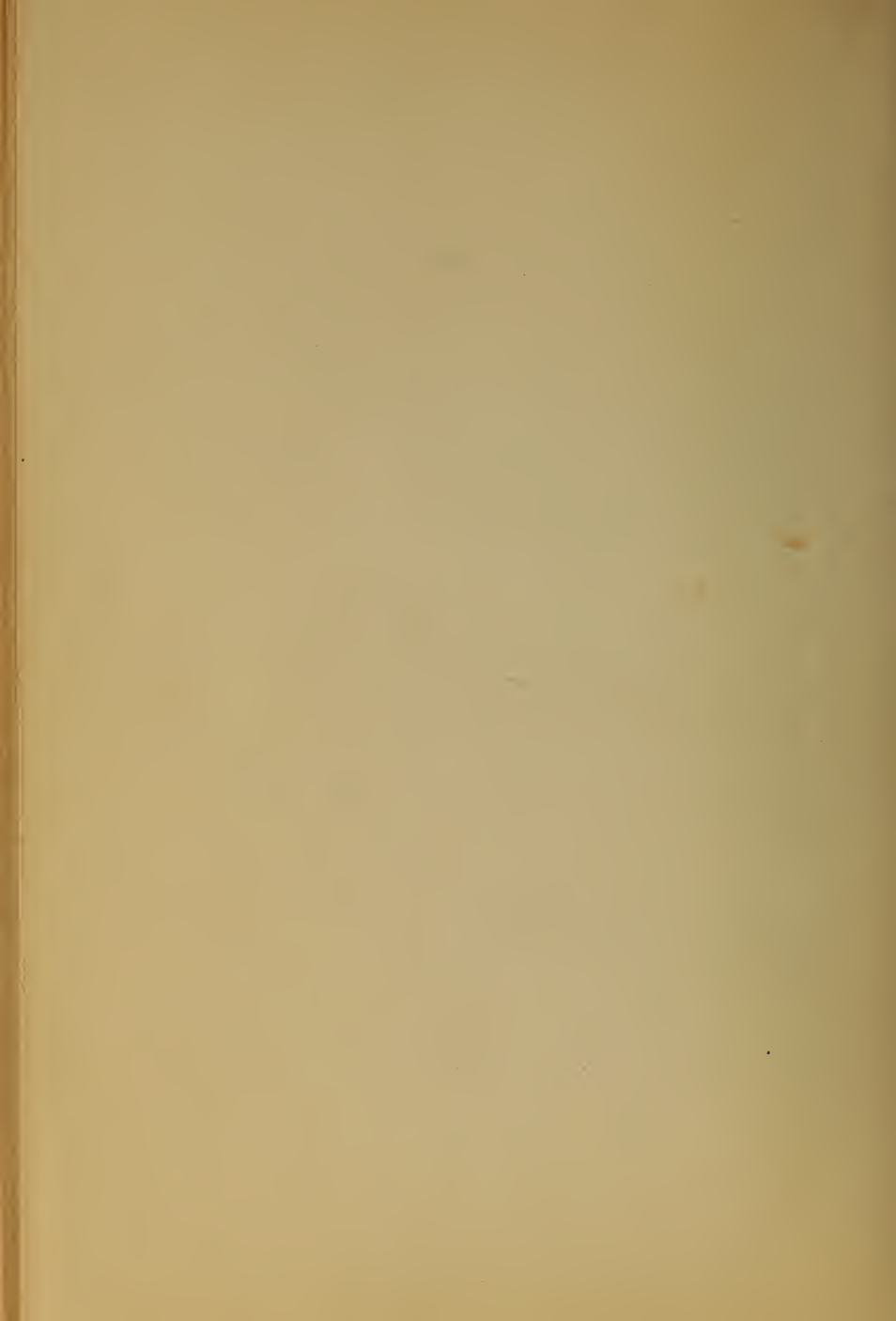
go to your home. I sincerely hope that Mr. Riley may be permitted to remain on earth many years yet, and convince many thousands more of this grand truth.

In conclusion, dear reader, should you decide to investigate this subject, do so seriously and honestly. If you get an untruth at some sitting, do not let this influence you to stop or denounce this beautiful philosophy; continue, and you will get light on the subject, and it will be more precious to you than anything else you could obtain on earth, for the reason that this life is of few days, and the other is for eternity; and when you have investigated this subject and have gotten proof beyond doubt, as I have, the question is then settled for you, and you know what to do that you may inherit the good in the other life.

THE END.







Decidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
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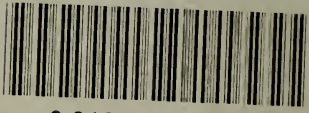
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